

Centenary Anthology

Pastimes, Glories and Teachings of

His Divine Grace

Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

*All Glories to the Divine Master
and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya*

Centenary Anthology

*Pastimes, Glories and Teachings of
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*

**First compiled as an offering on the Occasion of
The Centenary of his Holy Advent**

With an introduction by
His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Nabadwip, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

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Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Math, Kolerganj,
P.O. Nabadwip, Dist. Nadia, W.Bengal,
Pin 741302, India
with branches internationally

First printing (with Special **Sri Gaudiya**
Ḍaraṇan Supplement): 1995

Second printing: 1996:

Abhijit Das,
ATN Printers,
3 Tiljala Road, Calcutta 700 039,
India

Compiled by:

Mahānanda dāsa Bhakti Rañjan

Published by:

Sri Rasabdhī Brahmachary,
Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Kolerganj,
P.O. Nabadwip, Dist. Nadia,
W. Bengal, Pin 741302, India

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Offered for the satisfaction of our Guardians:

Their Divine Graces

Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

and

Ananta-śrī Vibhūṣita Paramahamṣa-kula-chūṛāmaṇi
Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

First offered on October 18th 1995, the occasion of
The Culmination of the Year Long Centenary Festival of
Śrīla Guru Mahārāj:
Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

With particular acknowledgement to:

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj by whose causeless
grace the world today has the opportunity to be connected to the
service of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's lotus feet.

Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj for giving the inspiration
to produce this publication in its present form.

Śrīpād Bhakti Sudhīr Goswāmī Mahārāj for his timely and
greatly appreciated presentation of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to the world.

As well as to the many devotees who have helped to make this and other
publications from the *Maṭh* possible, particularly:

Śrīpād Mādhavānanda Prabhu;

Śrīpād Rṣabdev Prabhu;

Śrīpād Premanidhi Prabhu,

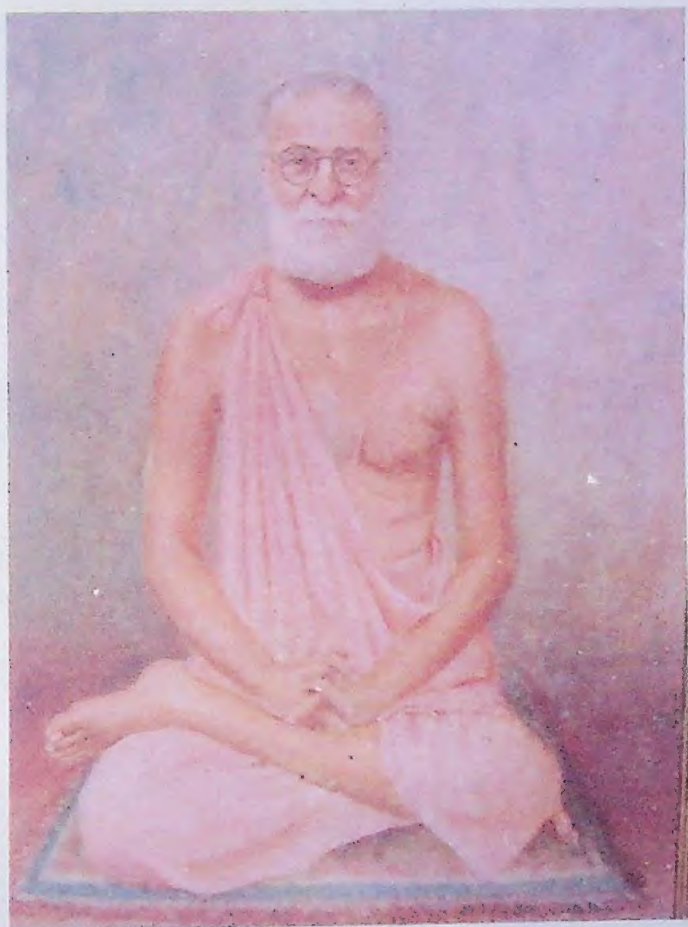
and many others...



Om Viṣṇupād Śrī
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
Sevāite and President-Āchāryya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh



Om Viṣṇupād Śrī
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Founder & President-Āchāryya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh



Om Viṣṇupād Śrī
Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Thākura
The Founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh



Om Viṣṇupād Śrī
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj
with Om Viṣṇupād Śrī
Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj

All glories to His Divine Grace, Oṃ Viṣṇupād Paramahaṃsa Ṭhākura Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, the most illustrious follower of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and who is ever giving the unlimited mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to the fallen souls. He has appeared as our most Divine Guardian. He is ever radiant in his mercy, and, resplendent like the morning sun, he is illuminating the most hidden recesses of our hearts.

Foreword

The Exclusive Line of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

by His Holiness Śrīpād Bhakti Pāvan Janārdana Mahārāj

*Formerly printed in the form of a
Centenary Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā offering*

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's conclusions embody the full *siddhānta* of the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, and his beautiful poetic style shines with the most sublime *Ujjvala-rasa* revealed by Śrī Gaurāṅga to His true followers.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has glorified the Brāhma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya. As an effulgent locket adorns a necklace, so Mahāprabhu appeared in the *Sampradāya* begun by Lord Brahmā: *kṛṣṇa hoite chatur-mukha*. There are of course four *Sampradāyas*: one was begun by Brahmā, one by the Kumāras, one by Lakṣmī and one by Lord Śiva. Their preceptorial lines are continuing, and their followers present the conclusions of such stalwarts in their respective *Sampradāyas* as Rāmānuja, Madhvāchāryya, Viṣṇuswāmī and Nimbarkāchāryya.

Still, in the words of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj,

**e-rūpa āroti brahmā śambhu agochara,
gaura bhakta kṛpā pātra mātra siddhi sāra**

"The divine worship of Mahāprabhu is beyond the vision of even Lord Brahmā or Lord Śiva. Only by receiving the mercy of a devotee of Lord Gaurāṅga can one attain such perfection." Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in the Brāhma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya, but what he came to give is beyond the vision of the preceptor of the *Sampradāya*, Lord Brahmā himself. It is also beyond the purview of Lord Śiva. Both are *mahājans*, and recognized devotees, still they are unable to participate in the exclusive devotion given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and known to His internal devotees such as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Rather they ever pray to have bestowed upon them the mercy of Mahāprabhu's true followers so they may continue the progressive development of their devotion.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is actually situated in His own internal *Sampradāya*, although apparently appearing within the Brāhma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya. *Mādhavendra purī-vara*, *śiṣya-vara śrī-īṣwara*. Who preceded Mahāprabhu and showed the deep *mahābhāva* mood of separation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. In the *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj progressively describes the deep mood of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpād expressed in the verse:

ayi dina-dayārdra nātha he, mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase

"O my Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathurā! When shall I see You again?" There it is noted that, "Actually this verse was spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, and by Her mercy only was it manifest in the words of Mādhavendra Purī. Only Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has tasted the poetry of this verse. No fourth person is capable of understanding it."

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's effulgence of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* showed, in the original sprout form, the glory of Mahāprabhu's *Sampradāya*. Although he was formally situated in the Brahmā-Madhvā-Gauḍīya Sampradāya, prior to his appearance there was no one in that line

who displayed the deep Love of Godhead, the mood of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* of Mādhavendra Purī. His disciple was the most fortunate Śrī Īśwara Purī, who was accepted as the preceptor of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

When Mahāprabhu visited the place of the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā, and was dancing before the Deity of Śrī Keśava, an elderly *brāhmaṇa* began to also dance in ecstatic love, *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, along with the Lord. Later, Mahāprabhu asked that *brāhmaṇa* where he had acquired such love. The elderly *brāhmaṇa* replied that he had a connection with Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, who had visited his house and accepted him as a disciple. He also told Mahāprabhu Himself:

**kintu tomāra prema dekhi' mane anumāni
mādhavendra-purīra 'sambandha' dhara—jāni.
kṛṣṇa-premā tāhā, yāhā tāhāra 'sambandha'
tāhā vinā ei premāra kāhā nāhi gandha.**

“Upon seeing Your ecstatic love, I can just imagine that You must have some relationship with Mādhavendra Purī. This is my understanding. This kind of ecstatic love can be experienced only by one who has a relationship with Mādhavendra Purī. Without him, even a scent of such transcendental ecstatic love is impossible.” Without a connection with Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, such Love of Godhead is not possible.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has always said that we are not worshippers of form, but of substance. There is a qualitative presence that is expressed in the *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*. We are not interested in mere general expressions like the *Guru-paramparā*, but we are interested in the living line of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's Sampradāya which is manifest in the hearts of the most qualified representatives of the Lord. Just as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is much more than the *Yuga-avatār*, being the most sublime combination of Rasa-rāj, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with Mahābhāva, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, similarly there are personalities who embody the presence of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī.

In more recent times, that most divine presence again revealed itself in the person of Śrīla Bhaktivinod Thākura. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj composed his beautiful *Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda-viraha Daśakam* during the time when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura was personally

present in this world. There, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj reveals:

**śrī-gaurānumataṁ svarūpa-viditaṁ rūpāgrajenādṛtaṁ
rūpādyaiḥ pariveśitaṁ raghu-gaṇair āsvāditaṁ sevitaṁ
jivādyair abhirakṣitaṁ śuka-śiva-brahmādi-sammānitaṁ
śrī-rādhā-pada-sevanāmṛtaṁ aho tad dātum īso bhavān**

“That which is the Gracious Gift of Śrī Gaurachandra, the deep, internal purport of which is known by Śrī Swarūp Dāmodar, that which is adored by Śrī Sanātan Goswāmī, and distributed by the *Rasa-tattvāchāryyas* headed by Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī; that which is tasted and enriched by Śrī Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī and followers, and tenderly protected by Śrī Jīva Goswāmī and his associates; and that which is venerated from afar by the great personalities like Mahādev, lord of the gods, and Brahmā, grandfather of the world—O wonder of wonders, that ecstatic nectar of the exclusive service of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā—you hold the perfect position to mercifully give even that to us.”

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj began to present his composition glorifying Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur, at first Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur listened in a very scrutinizing way to the initial verses. But as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj continued in his presentation, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur became immensely pleased and appreciative, and commented that he was confident and satisfied that at least one of his followers was qualified to continue and properly represent his *siddhānta* and the essence of Mahāprabhu's line.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has eternally glorified the quality of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur in his many beautiful compositions such as *Śrī Śrī Prabhupāda-padma Stavakaḥ*, which to this day is sung in temples all over the world by the followers of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has given us this beautiful *praṇām* verse in glorification of his Spiritual Master which Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself has explained:

**nikhila-bhuvana-māyā-chinna-vicchinna-kartrī
vibudha-bahula-mṛgyā-mukti-mohānta-dātrī**

**śīthilīta-vidhi-rāgārādhya-rādhēśa-dhānī
vilasatu hr̥dī nityaṁ bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī**

“With his first step, he vigorously cut asunder the whole plane of exploitation, and with his second, he has put a stop to all the calculations of the different scholars with their different conceptions of salvation, or liberated stages. With his third step, he has minimized the hardness and stiffness of the rules and regulations of calculative devotional service, by the touch of divine love: crossing Vaikuṇṭha, he has given us the worship of Rādhā and Govinda.

“Calculation, the rules and regulations, awe, reverence, all these things are minimized, checked, slackened with the softness of Vṛndāvan within, and with the hardness of a devastator without, he created havoc in the materialistic world, fighting with one and all. Single-handedly fighting against the whole world, and cutting asunder everything—that was his external attitude. And his second attitude was to put a stop to all scholarly researchers and doctorates of different departments, and to stop their boasting research; and third, to minimize, to slacken the grandeur of the worship of Nārāyaṇ. He caused the domain of love to descend into this plane with love from the heart as all in all. With that we come to serve our object of worship, and he represented the service of Rādhā-Govinda as the highest attainment. That was his history. The real existence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur Prabhupāda is in *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī*, his divine teachings. May that *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī* dance eternally within the core of your heart.”

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur was leaving this world, he called for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. In a gathering of his disciples he asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to sing *Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī-pada*. Previously, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur had examined Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and was satisfied that he could represent the essential line of Śrī Gaurachandra, given by His true representative and follower, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. Now, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur gave the charge of that line to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in a way that many senior godbrothers present described as a “mystic transmission” of responsibility.

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda departed from this world, his disciples sought out the association of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. It was not any formality which attracted them, any formal delegation of responsibility assigned to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. It was more intrinsic: they found in Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that effulgent *Kṛṣṇa-prema* which accompanies the highest realizations of the *Rūpānuga* line. It was this divine presence that attracted them, that made them ardently desire his association.

Their attraction for the association of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was not because of his rank or seniority; he was not the most senior Vaiṣṇava present. At that time there were other godbrothers of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, that were senior in the Mission to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj; but they themselves came to associate with him. Prominent devotees accepted *sannyās* from him, and saw him as their *Sannyās-guru*. Leading disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura felt inspired by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and looked towards him for his approval and inspiration in their own endeavours to preach and present the philosophy of their Spiritual Master.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has always presented the highest realizations of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava line, the true teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. During the time that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura was present, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was a prominent preacher. After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura left this world, many came to Nabadwīp to associate with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. When we look to personalities like Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī or Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī, we do not count the number of disciples they had or how many temples they established. Their contribution is never to be judged in such a superficial and neophyte manner. Actually all preaching and inspiration is derived from them alone, and the substance that they came to give is non-different from Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the internal reasons for His descent.

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj gave so much to those who actually can appreciate the real *Sampradāya* of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.

Without an appreciation for him it will not be possible for devotees today to ever know what are the essential teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu or ever aspire to know what is *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, love of Godhead.

For the last forty-two years of his life, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was always in the association of his disciple and personal friend, Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, his confidant and chosen successor. So intimately were Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj related that one could consider their two personalities as one combined existence. For instance, if it be true that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for reasons of his health, and to ultimately 'percolate' his high realizations, remained in his Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in Nabadwīp, he ultimately counted on the presence of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, who he imbued with an indomitable spirit to go out and give his own high realizations to the whole world. We are ever seeing the magnanimous and benevolent nature of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, and we consider it to be synonymous with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's desire to give the essential teachings of Mahāprabhu to the ever-expanding Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava world, who so much need them.

Although superficially it may seem that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj remained apart in his Maṭh, actually it was not so. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj depended on Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj to assist him in his mission, was himself inspired by Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj to share his beautiful realizations with the world, and ultimately entrusted everything to the hands of his beloved disciple: his Teachings, his Deities, his Realizations, his Maṭh, his Mission, his Life, Love and Inspiration.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj saw in Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj the qualities of one who could continue his mission and fully represent his deep realizations. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj is most qualified to give the essential conclusions of Mahāprabhu's teachings and the conclusions of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and the Āchāryyas who represent the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj dedicated so many years to prepare Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj for this great responsibility and considered that by seating Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj in his own chair that his endeavour was now complete. Those who supposedly follow Śrīla

Guru Mahārāj but cannot appreciate and honor his desire do him a great disservice. When Vallabha Bhaṭṭa said he could not accept the authority of Śrīdhara Swāmī (who had previously commented on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*), Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu concluded:

svāmī nā māne yei jana veśyāra bhitare tāre koriye gaṇana

"A woman who does not follow her *swāmī* [husband] is no better than a prostitute."

I offer my *daṇḍavat-praṇāms* at the lotus feet of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, and their eternal associates and followers. They are all capable of flooding this entire universe with that *Kṛṣṇa-prema* that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and his *Pārṣada* devotees came to give. They are each an ocean of mercy and are the only shelter for the fallen souls. I pray that they will not leave me behind. My prayer is that they will ever keep me near to them.

Centenary Year

Introduction

This Extremely Auspicious Day

A Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā address

by His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar
Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj,
(with final editing by the author)

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj preached very successfully all over India. His preaching satisfied Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur. Everyone had special respect for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and this was shown by their actions. Śrīla Bhakti Śaraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj took *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj even though Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was junior to him (in the mission). Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keśava Mahārāj was also senior to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and he was a very exalted *brahmachārī* of the *Sampradāya*, but he took *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Such advanced, intelligent personalities knew the prospect and conception of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur and his *Sampradāya*. Like these examples, many great devotees of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur wanted to take *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not give easily. They wanted to take, but I saw that often they were afraid to ask him. In Vṛndāvan in perhaps the 1950's I saw two disciples of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur who wanted to take *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but they could not approach him, and lastly they went to Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj. Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj then asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, "Mahārāj, shall I give *sannyās* to them?"

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had much respect for Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj and replied, "Yes. Why are you asking me?" But it is a fact that those devotees could not ask it from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Many wanted to take *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj but could not come to him directly. That was the position of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

There was a very dear disciple of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur who lived in the same room with Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur and received much affection from him—his name was Mahānanda Brahmachārī. We saw that lastly he came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and said, “Mahārāj, I want to take *sannyās* from you. Please give me *sannyās*.” Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave it very happily and his name became Śrīla Bhakti Ālok Paramahansa Mahārāj.

There were many other disciples of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur, including Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāj, who wanted to take *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Having some idea about their *Sampradāya* going in the line of Śrī Rūpānuga they all came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur expressed this through the highest song of our *Sampradāya*, *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada*. He wanted to hear that song from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, not from others. This story is famous.

If we need Ganges water we must go to the Ganges. Similarly it is necessary that if we want the conception given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as well as Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur we must come to Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. This was also the expression of all the devotees of Śrīla Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda.

We saw that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would yearly go once or twice to Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāj's *math*, and once or more to Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj's *math*. At that time there were strong party feelings amongst many devotees, but many of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Godbrothers from other camps, including the secretaries and stalwarts from all parties, came to see Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Every year on the appearance day of Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj, he invited Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to his *math*. For his respect Śrīla Guru Mahārāj went there each year. However, one year Śrīla Guru Mahārāj couldn't go because he was showing very poor health. Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj's expression was, “This year Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj cannot come. Every year he comes and blesses me with a further year of life,

and by this blessing I am existing. Now I am thinking that next year I shall not be able to accept the *pūjā* of my disciples." Such were the exalted feelings of Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj, and it happened that Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj disappeared that year and so was unable to attend his own next *Guru-pūjā* day.

At the time when the Gauḍīya Maṭh was divided, devotees would generally not visit devotees of any other camp. But when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would go to Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāj's maṭh, even the general secretary of the Gauḍīya Maṭh would come and meet with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. One day Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked Śrīpād Supatī Rāṅjan Nāg Prabhu, the general secretary of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, "Prabhu, why do you come to see me every time I come here?"

Supatī Bābu replied in a very nice way: "Your nature attracts us. Your disinterested nature, strong common sense and deep intelligence—these three things attract us, therefore I am coming to see you, and I am feeling so fortunate that still this kind of man is living within our *Sampradāya*."

In the Scriptures it is said:

**āchāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhichit
na marttya buddhyāsūyeta sarvva-deva-mayo guruḥ**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27)

That kind of Guru we have got. His mercy, his association, his associates' association, his friends' association, his Godbrothers' association we have got. In that way we can say we are very fortunate that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj bestowed his mercy upon us, but if we cannot worship him in a proper way and cannot respect him properly, then we will go to hell, actually.

You see, in the Scriptures it is said *Ācāryyaṁ Mām vijānīyāt*: Bhagavān Himself in the form of the *Āchāryya* appears in this mundane world to bestow His mercy to the sincere seekers.

Nāvamanyeta karhichit. Don't think anything about the Guru except that he is non-different from Kṛṣṇa. Then again Kṛṣṇa says, "*Na marttya buddhyāsūyeta*: don't consider him as a mundane man. He may appear in the form of a mundane body but he is not mundane. You must

consider him as Myself. *Sarvva-deva-mayo guruḥ*: all the *Devas* are living within his body." This kind of conception you must carry otherwise you cannot worship him properly. Respectful obeisance is necessary to the Guru. The fully surrendered soul will get full mercy from his Guru.

Guru has many forms, and one who is a *paramahansa* sees everyone as his Guru. We must try to consider the *Mahānta-guru*, *Chaittya-guru* and *Śikṣā-guru* in a non-different way, but we cannot always understand the signal of the *Chaittya-guru*. Our mind lives in the mundane idea, therefore we cannot always say that what our mind says is coming from Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes, for one who is a very fortunate soul, he will receive instruction from his *Chaittya-guru*. But Kṛṣṇa represents Himself in the form of the *Mahānta-* and *Śikṣā-gurus* for our direct guidance.

In which way can we understand? *Kṛṣṇas tu Bhagavān svayam. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* said:

**ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ, kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam, mṛdayanti yuge yuge**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28)

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and if we try to worship those who are really devoted to Kṛṣṇa, then our worship must go directly to Kṛṣṇa. This is the proper channel. We cannot serve Kṛṣṇa directly, but through Guru and Vaiṣṇava our service can go to Kṛṣṇa. We cannot see Kṛṣṇa, but through a 'lens' we can see Him, otherwise not. There are so many planets in the sky and they exist both by day and by night, but how many can we see? We can see them only by looking through a telescope, and that is made by lenses set one after another. This is the process, and in spiritual life this is called the *Guru-paramparā*. It is coming down by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in the form of a human body, or any kind of form, but when He is very merciful we can understand His glories.

**kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare-kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta Madhya* 22.47)

It is depending upon fortune, and that fortune comes through the service to Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. When we get such transcendental *sukṛti*, through that we get the connection of Guru. The Guru's position is so high. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used the expression, 'heavier than the Himalayas.'

One who is fully dedicated to his Guru will get everything. *Etat sarvvaṁ gurau bhaktyā, puruṣo hy añjasā jayet*. He can conquer and get everything by the mercy of Guru.

Before, in the Vedic age, we can see that the students would go to the Guru's house, and the Guru would engage them. This occurred also in the example of Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā. They were instructed: "Go to the jungle and bring some firewood. Go there." They were ordered to do many things, "Do this. Do that."

When disciples successfully carry out the order of their Guru and satisfy him, the Guru gives his blessings and they get all the transcendental knowledge, thus becoming all-rounders in spiritual life. In this present age also we have seen this kind of mercy in many cases.

So it is necessary to fully surrender to Guru and carry out his order. But if we think that Guru is mundane, then we will go to hell and not get anything of transcendental knowledge. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so high, and there is a special line of Guru. But even in an ordinary way we shall not get that conception of Vedic knowledge without their grace.

Today is a very auspicious day, that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, the bearer of that high conception of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—*Madhura-rasa*—on this day appeared to bestow his mercy upon us. This is an extremely auspicious day for us. He showed his appearance on the same day as Nityānanda Prabhu's son. Nityānanda Prabhu's glories were chanted by Śrī Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī:

preme matta nityānanda kṛpā-avatāra
uttama, adhama, kichhu nā kare vichāra
ye āge paṛaye, tāre karaye nistāra
ataeva nistārīlā mo-hena durāchāra

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta Ādi 5.208-209)

("Because He is intoxicated by ecstatic love Śrī Gaurāṅga is an incarnation of the ocean of mercy, He does not distinguish between the good and the bad. He delivers all those who fall down before Him. Therefore He has delivered such a sinful and fallen person as me.")

"I have no qualification, but Nityānanda Prabhu is so merciful that whoever goes to him receives his mercy. I have no qualification except that I approached him."

There is no cause. It is causeless mercy. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said many times that mercy is above justice. Justice searches qualification, but mercy does not search for qualification, but only dedication. The word 'dedication' is very easy to say, but Kṛṣṇa showed in which way the strength of dedication comes down into this mundane world. Kṛṣṇa said,

**sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarvva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ**

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 18.66)

"Don't worry, but you dedicate yourself to Me fully. Non-religion must be ignored, but also do not be involved with religion. Leave that. Leave everything. Leave whatever you think is good for you as well as whatever you think is bad for you. Leave everything and dedicate yourself fully to Me." That is the advice of Kṛṣṇa.

Sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, Mām ekaṁ, "I am the only person who can give you relief from everything." What kind of mood of dedication is required? "*Mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: you will see only the fully dedicated mood of Vraja-dhām."

Kṛṣṇa said there is nothing more necessary than this. This is final. He then asked Arjuna, "Now have you settled your position?" Arjuna replied: "Yes. Whatever You say, I shall do that." Dedication.

Full dedication we can see in Vraja-dhām. Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākura said:

**ārādhyo bhagavān brajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛndāvanaṁ
ramyā kāchid-upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavataṁ pramāṇam-amalaṁ premā pumartho mahān
śrī chaitanya-mahāprabhuḥ-matam-idaṁ tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ**

("It is the conclusive opinion of Lord Chaitanya that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Vrajendra-nandana, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, the topmost worshipable Supreme; Vṛndāvan-dhām which is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa and is non-different from Him is the highest worshipable abode; the *Gopīs* are the highest example of the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the spotless evidence for knowing the Absolute Truth; *Kṛṣṇa-prema* is the fifth and highest goal of life. These are the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya in a nutshell.")

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and our whole mood of worship must go to Him. Like the Ganges going to the ocean, when a devotee hears the glories of Kṛṣṇa, his mind also goes like the Ganges to the ocean. Why? Because Kṛṣṇa lives in everyone's heart. But full dedication is necessary. The Guru's mercy is supreme everywhere. Without his mercy we cannot do anything. If we think that Guru is mundane then we must be faulty, of this there is no doubt. So we must be careful.

There are ten kinds of *Nāmāparādha*. The third kind is *guruvavajñā*. You cannot ignore the directives and the lotus feet of your Gurudev. You must dedicate yourself there fully. His order is the order of all the Scriptures. *Tad ājñā gurūṇām hy avichāraṇiyā*. You must not consider whether it is right or whether it is wrong, but whatever the Guru will say, you must do that without hesitation. *Tad ājñā gurūṇām hy avichāraṇiyā*.

There are many varieties of expressions in the Scriptures glorifying Śrīla Gurudev. That Gurudev appeared on this day near to Nabadwip, showing his form in Hāpāniyā. By his mercy we have arranged there in a Temple the service of the Deity and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for the remembrance of his appearance. We shall also go there for a festival of his glorification.

Today is Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's appearance day, and this is the highest auspicious day for the conditioned souls. I am praying to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. He is always merciful to us, no doubt, but more strength is necessary to fight with the *māyā*, the illusion. If illusion will manifest such as in the case of taking the form of Bibhīṣaṇ, that is

particularly dangerous. Such type of illusion is possible. Even Hanumān himself was also charmed by the illusion of Mahīrāvaṇ.

The story is that Rāvaṇ was defeated in many ways by Rāma-chandra, then he called his son, Mahīrāvaṇ, who was living down in Pātāla, the lower part of these worlds. Mahīrāvaṇ had much power. He could go anywhere and in anyway. He went to Rāvaṇ and said, "Father, what happened? I see that Laṅkā is massacred."

Rāvaṇ replied, "Rām and Lakṣmaṇ have destroyed everything, but we cannot compete with them. They are destroying but we cannot kill them." Mahīrāvaṇ then said, "This is a small matter. I shall arrange it nicely."

Mahīrāvaṇ had much power of illusion through the worship of the goddess Kālī. He arranged to steel Rām and Lakṣmaṇ with the intention of taking them to his own country to kill them as an offering in front of Mother Kālī.

Bibhīṣaṇ was in the company of Rām and Lakṣmaṇ and he knew of the illusory power of Mahīrāvaṇ. When he heard Mahīrāvaṇ had come to Laṅkā, Bibhīṣaṇ made everyone conscious of Mahīrāvaṇ's danger, "He can make illusion at any moment, so you must be careful."

Hanumān said, "Yes, I shall make a big fort with my tail. Everyone can stay there including Rām and Lakṣmaṇ. No one will be able to enter within that fort, so Mahīrāvaṇ will not be able to enter. I shall stand guard at the gate, also Bibhīṣaṇ can guard the wall of the fort, so no problem will come."

They did this and Hanumān remained at the gate so none could enter the tail-made fort. Bibhīṣaṇ guarded the fort wall. It took him a little time to walk all around the wall of the fort—perhaps half an hour. He would periodically come back to consult with Hanumān, "Has anyone come here?"

One time Hanumān said, "Yes, Janak Rāja (the father of Sītā) came. He wanted to enter within the fort. I asked him to wait here for Bibhīṣaṇ and if he gives permission he may then enter." In this way Mahīrāvaṇ took on several forms such as Janak Rāja, Daśarath and Kauśalyā with the desire of entering that fort. In each case Hanumān asked them to wait but they went away.

Lastly Mahīrāvaṇ took the form of Bibhīṣaṇ. One time after consulting with Hanumān, Bibhīṣaṇ went away but within a short time, perhaps ten minutes, he again came before Hanumān. This time he was not the real Bibhīṣaṇ, but Mahīrāvaṇ. Hanumān commented, "Oh, you have toured the walls very quickly this time."

Bibhīṣaṇ replied, "No, actually I forgot that I wanted to give a *kavach* to Rām and Lakṣmaṇ and it will be very nice for them, therefore I came back and didn't complete the tour of the wall."

Hanumān thought it was the real Bibhīṣaṇ, so he said, "Yes, you can go inside. No problem."

Mahīrāvaṇ went inside and made an illusion whereby everyone went to sleep. He then took Rām and Lakṣmaṇ, made a hole, and went to Pātāla.

After some time the real Bibhīṣaṇ came back. When Hanumān saw him he challenged, "Who are you? You went ten minutes ago inside the fort, so who are you?"

Then Bibhīṣaṇ replied, "Yes. I am Bibhīṣaṇ, your friend."

"No! Bibhīṣaṇ already entered within the fort. You are not him!"

Then Bibhīṣaṇ struck his forehead and said, "Oh, in my form Mahīrāvaṇ must have come and entered within the cave."

Hanumān didn't believe him and took his hand. "Come with me, we shall go inside." Within they saw a big hole and they saw that Rām and Lakṣmaṇ had been stolen by Mahīrāvaṇ.

So, if like taking the form of Bibhīṣaṇ strong illusion will attack us, we do not see any way except the protection of our preceptor and protector, Śrī Gurudev. If we have full faith in our Gurudev and are fully surrendered to our Gurudev, we must get transcendental strength, and in that way we can remove all illusion by his grace. So it is necessary to have strong faith in Gurudev, and to surrender fully to his divine lotus feet, then we shall get everything. We can appeal today to the lotus feet of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for that kind of strength. We are fallen souls, and very conditioned souls trying to proceed to our destination, but we cannot proceed properly because we are within the illusory environment. By his mercy we can proceed, but the destination is so far from us; so may he mercifully bestow more and more

mercy upon us. This is my prayer on this day to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and to his dear associates, and to all of you.

This year we have a special opportunity for the disciples of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj as well as his devotional family to serve His Divine Grace with glorification, offerings and services of many types for his Divine Mission, the Deities and devotees. I believe it must be successful by his Divine Grace. Side by side, it is my special prayer to you all that you give your mercy to me so that I can serve Śrīla Guru Mahārāj properly. This is my earnest prayer this day.

Centenary Year

Part 1

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj— His Pastimes and Glories

Chapter 1 is from

'The Guardian of Devotion'

(printed 1985 & 1988)

presented by Śrīpād B.S. Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Chapters 2 and 3 are from

*'Śrīla Guru Mahārāj — His Divine Pastimes
& Precepts in Brief'* (printed 1994)

presented by Śrīpād B.A. Sāgar Mahārāj.

All Glories to Śrī Curu and Gaurāṅga

Chapter One

Śikṣā Guru

“Our relationship is very intimate...”

An excerpt from *“The Guardian of Devotion”* (Californian edition)
compiled by Śrīpād B. S. Goswāmī Mahārāj

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhuṇpād and Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj first met sometime in the year 1930 in Allahabad, India. In a taped conversation recorded in a 1973 meeting at Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's *maṭh* at Nabadwīp Dhāma, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj recalls: “So, we are very fortunate to hear His Divine Grace, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa-parivṛājākācāryya Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Mahārāj. By age and by experience, in both ways, he is senior to me. I was fortunate to have his association since a very long time, perhaps in 1930, something like that. At that time, he did not accept *sannyāsa*; he just left home, and as a *vānaprastha*, in his white dress, he went to Allahabad.

“[To Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj] Mahārāj, I think you remember the incident when you went to Allahabad? On that auspicious occasion, we were connected. There is a long story, it will take time, but I had the opportunity of associating with Śrīdhara Mahārāj for several years. Kṛṣṇa and Prabhuṇpād liked him to prepare me.

“Śrīdhara Mahārāj lived in my house for many years, so naturally, we had very intimate talks and he was my good adviser. I took his advices, instructions, very seriously because from the very beginning I know that he is a pure Vaiṣṇava, a pure devotee, and I wanted to associate with him and tried to help him also. Our relationship is very intimate.” Herein, we find the history of a transcendental relationship

between these two pure devotees of the Lord. Addressing Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as “His Divine Grace” and “Om Viṣṇupāda”—forms of address for one regarded as a spiritual master—Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj has transcended the norms of social etiquette and superficial formality. Intimately associating together for a concentrated period of over five years, often for five to seven hours daily, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj considered that “Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupād liked him to prepare me” for his future expansive missionary activities in the Western world. While remembering their intimate talks, specifically in regard to *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj recalls the depth in penetration of their discussions. “Once while discussing the verse *dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ, yena mām upayānti te* [Bg.10.10 “I give them the understanding by which they can come to Me.”] I submitted to him that here, *upayānti* is indicative of *parakīya rasa* [paramour relationship]. On this point he agreed with me, saying, ‘Yes, at this point there cannot be anything but the *parakīya rasa* of Vraja. The conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā* must come to this.’”

Recognizing Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as “a pure Vaiṣṇava, a pure devotee” since the beginning of their relationship, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj most highly valued his instructions and advice. He would often consult with him regarding the spiritual significance of his failing business and family relationships.

An example of how Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj tried to help Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj in his preaching work is seen in his appreciating Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's uncanny ability for extracting the essence of the Scriptures. He helped to finance the publication of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's original Sanskrit-Bengali work entitled *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam: Life-Nectar of the Surrendered Souls*. The book, as well as containing original Sanskrit verses composed by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, is a compilation of verses from various Vaiṣṇava Scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and includes excerpts from the works of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. It is divided according to the six divisions of surrender.

Constantly associating, whether in Allahabad, Calcutta, or other parts of India, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Śrīdhara

Mahārāj’s relationship continually developed. Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj continues to recall their meeting: “In my householder life I had opened an office in Bombay for our business. The Bombay Gauḍīya Maṭh was established by Śrīdhar Mahārāj and myself. We made two parties for begging, collecting alms. Śrīdhar Mahārāj, myself, and Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj. So, I took them to my chemist friends and I collected about five hundred rupees. Śrīdhar Mahārāj would speak, I would introduce, and Goswāmī Mahārāj would canvass.”

In the *Śrīla Prabhupād-līlāmṛta*, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswāmī writes, “Abhay would often accompany Śrīdhar Mahārāj and his assistants at preaching programs, where he would play the *mṛdaṅga*. And when Śrīdhar Mahārāj fell ill, Abhay led the other devotees on preaching engagements, performing *kīrtana*, playing *mṛdaṅga*, and giving lectures on the *Bhāgavatam*.”

While still in Bombay, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj were the receiving party for a Gauḍīya Maṭh *sannyāsī* upon his return from Europe. Although dismayed by his changed appearance which was missing the *tridaṇḍa* of a Gauḍīya *sannyāsī*, the *śikha* of a Vaiṣṇava, as well as the traditional robes, they still eagerly inquired in regard to the preaching field in the West. The *sannyāsī* remarked, “They ask questions that cannot be answered.” Concerned, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj inquired further as to the nature of those questions. One after another Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj answered them all. At last, the *sannyāsī* was left dumbfounded and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj boldly declared, “Today, Europe has been defeated by Asia!”

During the lifetime of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj once composed a poem describing the ontological positions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the line of disciplic succession stemming from Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura was so pleased with the poem’s ontological depth and its happy style that he remarked, “Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written this through him. Now I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man remains behind who can represent my

conclusions.” In further appreciation of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's writings, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura informed the editors of the Gauḍīya Maṭh's periodicals, “If you include articles written by Śrīdhara Mahārāj, the quality of your publications will be greatly improved.”

After the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the Gauḍīya Maṭh gradually diverged. With full knowledge of the events surrounding the disintegration of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj told his disciples in the same 1973 conversation, “Our relationship is very intimate. After the breakdown of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, I wanted to organize another organization, making Śrīdhara Mahārāj the head.”

Reciprocating the appreciation, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj advised the leaders of the Gauḍīya Saṅgha to confer the title “Bhaktivedānta” upon the then Abhay Charaṇa. Later, his *sannyās-guru*, Śrīpād Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāj, one of the senior-most disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the first *sannyās* disciple of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, gave *sannyāsa* to Abhay Charaṇa, retaining the title “Bhaktivedānta,” and conferring the *sannyāsa* name “Swāmī.”

Additionally, when Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj returned to India in October of 1967, after his successful preaching initiative in America, he stayed with Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj in Nabadwīp, and observed his Vyāsa-pūjā celebration. At that time, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj wrote a letter to a disciple saying, “Yesterday, we have all come to Nabadwīp Dhāma. This place is an establishment of one of my Godbrothers. It is a very nice and extensive place, and my Godbrother B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāj has spared one entire house for our stay. He has also agreed to cooperate with our society. We shall observe his birthday celebration, and the *brahmacharīs* shall learn how to celebrate the spiritual master's birthday.” Shortly afterwards, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj asked Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj to be the president of his newly formed society—the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

During the Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, one of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj's disciples saw Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj

and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja fully absorbed in a deep discussion in Bengali. The disciple inquired from Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja what was the nature of their talk, and he replied, “If I were to tell you, you would faint. Śrīdhara Mahārāja has very high realizations.”

That Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja continually regarded Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja as his adviser throughout his life is clear in the following letter written by him to one of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s disciples, Śrīpāda Govinda Mahārāja. Concerned about his failing health, he had written Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja asking whether he should continue living in the United States or return to India to live his last days in Vṛndāvana. After receiving Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s reply, he wrote, “What Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja has directed, I take it on my head. He is my always well-wisher. After the departure of Prabhupāda it is appropriate that I should accept his direction. I got direction from him that I shall live in this country forever.”

Sometimes it is said that one’s preaching contribution can be judged according to the number of temples established, devotees converted, and books published and distributed. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja travelled and preached extensively all over India, personally accompanying Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura for many years. Nearly fifty years¹ ago, he established the Śrī Chaitanya Sārasvata Maṭha on the banks of the Ganges in Nabadwīp Dhāma, which is now a thriving institution. His followers have established temples in major cities throughout the world. His Sanskrit and Bengali writings have been appreciated by both scholars and devotees for their originality, depth of realization, and happy poetic style. Published and widely distributed throughout the world, they are now available in English, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, German, French², and are being translated into other languages.

¹ Since then the Maṭha’s Golden Jubilee was gloriously celebrated in 1991.

² By now, the culmination of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja’s Centenary year, his books are available in: Gujarati, English, Dutch, German, Italian, Russian, Swedish, Farsi, Malay, Tamil, Oriya, Bengali, Hindi, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Czech and Hungarian

Throughout his life, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj always maintained the highest respect and confidence in Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. He considered that whenever it was not possible for his disciples to proceed directly under his guidance, that they should take direction from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. He once wrote in a letter to one of his students, "Because you are my disciple, and I think, a sincere soul, it is my duty to refer you to someone who is competent to act as a *Śikṣā-guru*. For spiritual advancement of life, we must go to someone who is actually practicing spiritual life. So, if you are actually serious to take instructions from a *Śikṣā-guru*, I can refer you to the one who is the most highly competent of all my Godbrothers. This is B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāj, whom I consider to be even my *Śikṣā-guru*, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have by his association. So, if you are serious about the advancement of your spiritual life, I will advise you to go to Śrīdhara Mahārāj. It will be very good for your spiritual benefit, and I will feel that you are safe. When I was in India with the others, we lived with Śrīdhara Mahārāj. You can also make arrangements for your other Godbrothers to go there in the future. So, live peacefully with Śrīdhara Mahārāj, and thereby you will be spiritually enlightened."

In this passage, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj describes Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as "the most competent of all my Godbrothers," "someone competent to act as *Śikṣā-guru*," and in an astounding statement he declares, "I consider Śrīdhara Mahārāj to be my *Śikṣā-guru*, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have from his association!"

What Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj means by *Śikṣā-guru* is best explained in his own words. In his purports to the *Ādi-līlā* of *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, he states: "One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī states that there are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service and the other is he who invokes the disciple's spiritual consciousness by means of relevant instructions. There is no difference between the shelter-giving Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. If one foolishly discriminates between

them, he commits an offence in the discharge of devotional service.” (*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*. Ādi, 1.47)

Although it may be said that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj encouraged his Godbrothers in general, no one anywhere can produce a similar statement of endorsement. The fact is that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj possessed the highest respect and appreciation for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is unparalleled in his understanding and admiration of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, as evinced in the following eulogy:

“So our Swāmī Mahārāj has done a miracle! Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda conceived and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura began to translate this conception into action. And we find that through Swāmī Mahārāj, in his last days, it has been fulfilled to such a great extent. We are happy, we are glad, we are proud!”

In response to this, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj with great humility, his voice choked with emotion, tearfully replied, “So, by *Guru* and Vaiṣṇava, whatever position I have got it is by *Guru*’s mercy and the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas. Otherwise, how I may have? So, I wish that Śrīdhara Mahārāj may bestow his blessings as he was doing always, and may *Guru Mahārāj* help me so I can do some service. By his grace it has become successful. I have no credit. I do not know how things are happening, because I am not at all qualified: *chāṛiya vaiṣṇava sevā, nīṣṭara payeche keba*. [Without serving an ideal Vaiṣṇava, who can be delivered from the clutches of *māyā*?]”

And after the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj declared, “I consider him to be *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, and it is confirmed in his writings on his spiritual journey through the Atlantic. How he landed there in America, and the nature of his beginning the movement, his intense degree of dedication to Kṛṣṇa and dependence, and how much he made himself empty of any other desire than the order of his *Gurudeva*—quite empty that Kṛṣṇa came down to help him, and it is corroborated that Kṛṣṇa worked on his behalf. In his poem, *Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa*, we find him pleading with Kṛṣṇa, ‘My dear Brother, Your good fortune will come to You only when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with You.’

Seeing his *Gurudeva* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī as Rādhārāṇī's delegation and his order as Her divine service, he humbly submitted that he did not feel himself worthy or fit to discharge the divine service, so he enlisted Kṛṣṇa in the service of his *Guru*. He had completely dedicated himself to the purpose, he was so earnest in his prayer to Kṛṣṇa that he may discharge the duty that he has been given by his *Guru Maharaja*, that divine force, power came down to help him. Otherwise, it is impossible. It is not a thing of the ordinary level that anyone will do, but the highest thing has been taken down to the lowest position so extensively. It cannot but be the divine power, embodied and in a great intensity and magnitude! So, *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, I cannot but take him to be so."

With such appreciation, there should be little doubt why Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj had implicit faith in Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. He had even heard directly from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura of the exceptional qualifications of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. In their last known recorded meeting in 1977, just prior to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj's leaving this mortal world, we find him imploring Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj to take up residence at his temple in Śrīdhama Māyāpura.

The conversation that ensues is a transcript of their taped conversation of March 1977.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj: I do not know for how long I will be able to carry on. So, I came to see Śrīdhara Mahārāj.

Devotee: If you all go away, then the world will become dark.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: [to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj] It is so wonderful that the will of the Lord becomes manifest through someone.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj: I want very much, Mahārāj, that you come and stay at Māyāpura. Because Prabhupāda always desired that you preach. He told me quite a few times, "Why don't you pull him out?" [They both laugh.] You know, I also tried to some extent before, but somehow or other it did not work out. Now, why don't you come and stay at Māyāpura? Śrīla Prabhupāda told me also, "Śrīdhara

Mahārāj is one of the finest preachers." I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Māyāpur, people are coming from all over the world. Why don't you come and stay there? If you just agree, then whatever kind of building you want, I will arrange it for you. They are trying to build a house for me. So both of us will stay there. And whenever you want, you can come here to your *math*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, as long as I am alive to fulfil Prabhupād's desire.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj: This is my earnest desire. Since you could not go around the world and preach, at least stay there and people will come to you. I shall make that arrangement. If you stay, then it will be helpful to me also. Sometimes I need to consult with someone but there is no one. There is no one that I can consult. I feel this deficiency very greatly.

Devotee: If he stays in Māyāpur, then, all kinds of people will get to hear from him.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj: Yes, that's right.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Yes, people from all kinds of cultural backgrounds will come there.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj: Yes, and they are already coming. And in that house I will make arrangements for an elevator so that you won't have to go through the difficulty of walking up and down the stairs. You won't even have to move a step yourself. I'll make arrangements for a car and a lift. My disciples are telling me that they will build a house for me. So, both of us will stay in that house. Most of the time I am travelling around, so if you are there, then they can get some guidance. So, Mahārāj, *please*, give me the order and I will make all the arrangements for you. That Planetarium [The "Temple of Understanding"] also will be built under your direction. My idea is to combine the Indian culture and the American money—the lame man and the blind man policy. I tell them also that this will be very beneficial for the world.

Here, in their final meeting, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj prophetically refers to his imminent disappearance and reveals that it

is in this connection that he has come to see Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. In friendly jesting, they discuss Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's reticence regarding large-scale preaching work. Of himself, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj has remarked, "I did not want to become a big person. That is not my nature. I did not want to move around with many people. I am just satisfied with whatever I have. My spiritual thinking is my life. The conclusions of the Scriptures, the advices of the *mahājanas*, to relish them and practice them and to discuss them in a small confidential circle, that is the main goal of my life." In the Ninth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, quoting Dhruva Mahārāj, writes: "'My dear Lord, I am fully satisfied with whatever You have given me. I have nothing else to ask from You, for I am fully satisfied to be engaged in Your service.' This is the mentality of a pure devotee who does not want anything material or spiritual from the Personality of Godhead. Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore called *kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta-saṅgha*, the association of persons who are simply interested in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj testifies to his having personally heard Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mark the high qualifications of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, whom he had once requested to go to the West. In this regard, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj once remarked, "My *Guru Mahārāj* wanted me to go to the West for preaching, but I don't consider myself a fit person to preach in the West. Because, you see, I can't follow your intonation. So, [laughing] I must listen clearly, then I shall tell. So, in this way, I told that *if you order, I must go*, but I don't think that I am fit to preach in the West. Anyhow, it was stopped, and Goswāmī Mahārāj was sent to the West." When Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj had been selected, one of his godbrothers came to him and revealed the reason why Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had chosen him to preach in the West. This Godbrother explained, "Do you know why Prabhupāda wanted you to be sent to the West? He said, 'Because he can't be converted.'"

And just twenty-four hours before his departure from this mortal world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called for his beloved disciple Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, and asked him to sing the song of

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākur: *Śrī-Rūpa-Mañjarī-pada* (the lotus feet of Rūpa Mañjarī are my treasure). Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj recalls: “So I did, hesitatingly. My nature is always hesitating, pushing back. Then, Kuñja Babu asked me to stop. I was not a good singer, so as soon as he suggested, I stopped. Then, Kuñja Babu asked Purī Mahārāj of Kalna, ‘You sing.’ So he began. Then, Śrīla Prabhupād was a little disturbed. ‘I don’t like to hear the sweet tune of the song,’ he said. Then, he stopped, and I had to begin again with *śrī rūpa mañjarī pada, sei mora saṁpada*. He wanted me to sing that song. That is the fulfilment of life of everyone of us, to be *rūpānuga*—followers of Śrī Rūpa.”

Senior godbrothers who witnessed this exchange have described it as a “mystic transmission” in which Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj was given admittance into the eternal entourage of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj’s humble vision, however, is that he was posted as the gatekeeper, the guardian of devotion (*Bhakti-Rakṣak*), to protect the storehouse of conclusive truths about the full-fledged theistic conception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Further expressing his appreciation for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj’s “high realizations” in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj says, “I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Māyāpur, people are coming from all over the world. Why don’t you stay there?” Sometimes it is wondered why Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj apparently did not take up Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj’s offer. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj explains, “I said, ‘Of course I shall try to help you. Sometimes I shall go and stay there with you.’ But I really did not think at the time that I shall survive him.”

Finally, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj refers to “that planetary system.” Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is very fond of Sanātana Goswāmī’s most famous work, the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam*, in which devotees, devotional service, and Kṛṣṇa are described very scientifically. On the basis of this transcendental literature, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj had contemplated an elaborate preaching exhibition, showing graphically, with the use of dioramas depicting the varieties of material and spiritual planetary systems, how the ultimate spiritual destination is

Kṛṣṇa's own abode, Goloka Vṛndāvan. Due to insufficient funds, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj humbly submitted his idea to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, who approved saying, "It will be built under your direction."

And just prior to his departure from this mortal world, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj advised his senior disciples that in his absence, when the necessity arose to consult higher authority, that they should consult Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. In conclusion, we humbly submit that the transcendental relationship between Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj be viewed and respected in terms of their eternal spiritual positions, and long-standing appreciation and affection for one another.

Since the departure of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupād, the "Guardian of Devotion," His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, has repeatedly protected the teachings of the disciplic succession from perversion and misrepresentation as he has done for more than half a century, and has come to be recognized as a *Jagad-guru* or World Ācāryya.

Centenary Year

শ্রীশ্রীগুরুগৌরান্দো জয়তঃ
All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Chapter Two

Transcendental History

(A condensed excerpt from '*Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—His Divine Pastimes & Precepts in Brief*' by Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj)

The blessed parents of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī, of highly respected Brāhminical lineage, were Śrī Śrī Upendra Chandra Deva Sharmmā Bhaṭṭāchāryya Vidyāratna and Śrīmatī Gaurī Bālā Devī. They named their illustrious son, our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrī Rāmendra Chandra Deva Sharmmā Bhaṭṭāchāryya. His blessed Appearance was at Śrīpāṭ Hāpāniyā, District Burdwan, West Bengal. During the presence of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in the world, at that sacred place a beautiful Temple and Ashram, by the name of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Ashram, was constructed by our benevolent Sevaite-President-Āchāryya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

From his noble and gracious father, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's exalted line of forefathers [*Sāt-puruṣa*] are as follows: his father's name, Śrīyukta Upendra Chandra Deva Sharmmā Bhaṭṭāchāryya; his grandfather's name, Śrīyukta Rām Gopāl Deva Sharmmā; his great grandfather's name, Śrīyukta Rāmdhan Deva Sharmmā; his father was Śrīyukta Rājīva Lochan Deva Sharmmā; his father was Śrīyukta Mṛtyuñjay Deva Sharmmā; his father was Śrīyukta Dhanañjay Deva Sharmmā; and his father was Śrīyukta Govinda Rām Deva Sharmmā. The title 'Bhaṭṭāchāryya' was peculiar to the line when they predominantly performed and taught religious sacrifices and worship [*paurohitya*]. In the line, many were also Brahminical spiritual masters with thousands of disciples. There were a number of professions adopted in the line,

including farming and landownership. Sanskrit scholarship was predominant all through. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was aware that Śrīyukta Rāmdhan was a particularly outstanding scholar. The illustrious family line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj originates with the sage called Rājaṣi Vātsya, and is known as the Rājaṣi Vātsya *Gotra*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's mother's family lineage was also Bhaṭṭāchāryya *Brāhmaṇa*. Her father's name was Śrīyukta Rādhā Vallabha Bhaṭṭāchāryya, from a place called Khaithan.

By the arrangement of the free will of fortune, the first child of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's parents did not live. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was the first son, then after His Divine Grace the second son was Śrīyukta Maṇindra Chandra, after whom came the first daughter Śrīyuktā Jagadhātṛī Devī. After her were two sons, Śrīyukta Satyendra Chandra, then Śrīyukta Amarendra Chandra. The last two children were the daughters Śrīyuktā Uṣā Rāṇī Devī and Śrīyuktā Ramā Rāṇī Devī. Śrīyuktā Ramā Rāṇī Devī [Devyā], a devout disciple of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Also, Śrīyuktā Jagadhātṛī Devī, Śrīyukta Satyendra Chandra and Śrīyukta Amarendra Chandra all accepted initiation from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Prior to the Appearance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, his father's elder brother's wife [*jeṭhi-mā*], Śrīmatī Kumud Kāminī, was one day visiting a holy place of pilgrimage to have the *darśan* of a particular Deity. She dreamt that night that the Deity presented her with a beautiful baby. The baby was effulgent and his head was without hair. She thought, Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī has no issue, so in the dream she gave the baby to the hand of Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī. After some days, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj appeared, and lo—Śrīmatī Kumud Kāminī saw that the newly-born child was identical with the beautiful baby of her dream.

He stayed at his maternal uncle's house for his primary education at Khaithan Grām where he attended the local Pāṭhśālā [primary school] there. His intelligence was brilliant, his character most exalted. Twice he got double promotions at school, and he was always top of the class.

From childhood, he had an in-born aptitude for the Sanskrit language. He attended the high school at Okarsā, about two miles walk West from his home at Hāpāniyā.

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was a youth, Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī would cook many tasteful vegetable dishes for the family. But when Śrīla Guru

Mahārāj ate, his mother wept. Guru Mahārāj would only accept one vegetable—the bitter Neem leaf prepared as a wet vegetable with rice. Further, he would only eat what was given to him once. He wouldn't accept anything a second time—because in his heart he offered everything to the Lord before eating.

As a young lad, he unfailingly bathed every day in the sacred Ganges at Dāmpāl. Rising early before sunrise, he would walk there daily, three miles and back. He would also pick some lotus flowers from a natural reservoir and offer them every day to the Ganges and Lord Śiva. Once when walking to Jāmāpur with a lotus flower in his hand for offering to the Deity Buīārāj [Lord Śiva], he had a sudden revelation of Viśva-Rūpa, the Universal Form.

When studying at Baharampur college at District Mushīrabād, one day Śrīla Guru Mahārāj happened to meet an astrologer at the Baharampur railway station. The astrologer requested Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to show him his hand, upon seeing which he remarked that [1] Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would be fully self-realized, [2] he would become a famous preacher of *Harikathā* far and wide, and [3] he would depart the world at ninety-three years of age. All three predictions came true. The name of the astrologer was Yogī Bīr Śrī Baradā Majumdār. He was the headmaster of the Lālgolā high school, seven stations down the line, about a two-hour trainride from Baharampur. That school was founded by a King by the name of Rājā Yogendra Nārāyaṇa Rāo, in the name of his father Rājā Mahendra Nārāyaṇa Rāo. Yogī Bīr Baradā Majumdār was accepted by the famous general of Bengal, Subhash Chandra Bose, as his Guru.

At college Śrīla Guru Mahārāj became indifferent to his books of study, and would read only *Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta* and *Śrī Chaitanya-Bhāgavata*. Yet, he passed his examinations, coming in the first division, while the student most diligent in his studies failed. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts he studied law, but before completing those studies he joined Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement in 1921, staying for about two years. From childhood, however, despite the fact that he was born in a renowned *Smārta-brāhmaṇa* family, his natural mood of religious attraction was for the *Śaṅkīrtan* [congregational chanting of the Holy Name] of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Oṃ Viṣṇupād Paramahansa Śrī Śrīla Prabhupād Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī [1874–1937] was the illustrious Founder-President of Śrī Chaitanya Maṭh with sixty-four branches all over India, known as *Gauḍīya Maṭhs*. He also established preaching missions abroad. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, during his college studies, was deeply attracted to the Divine Life and Precepts of Śrī Chaitanyadev, and as a result he first made contact with Śrīla Prabhupād in the Gauḍīya Maṭh, and he fully committed himself to the Mission in 1926. When Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj left home and joined the Mission, his Gurudev, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupād was overjoyed, and he quoted the famous *Śrī Gītā śloka* in appreciation:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

yad yad ācharati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvarttate

“The people follow the ways of the great. They follow whatever conclusion the great personalities accept as correct.” He expressed his openhearted joy that such an extremely qualified person as Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj had come forward to participate in the Mission of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Even before taking *sannyāsa*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj was a very exalted and firm preacher in the Mission, and Śrīla Prabhupād was most satisfied with him. In 1930, at the original Ulṭā Ḍāṅgā Gauḍīya Maṭh, Śrīla Prabhupād Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī ordained him in *Sannyāsa* [monkhood], awarding him the *Tridaṇḍa-Sannyāsa* title of *Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara*, meaning ‘the Illustrious Guardian of Devotion’, because of his formidable scriptural command and natural, deep spiritual insight. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj travelled extensively throughout the whole of India preaching fluently in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and English. His English carried an attractive sweetness and eloquence of a unique character. He successfully spread Lord Śrī Chaitanyadev’s Message on mass levels such as various colleges and universities, and he conducted public seminars and *Sanikīrtan* Festivals.

Once when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj went to Girīḍi at Bihār, he delivered a lecture at the Barristers' Library there. After the lecture a gentleman came forward, and weeping, he said, "We used to think that our ancestors were fools, and that we have now become civilised by the association of the British. But today, Mahārāj, hearing your talk, we cannot but feel how great we were, and how low we have fallen! Our ancestors were so, so great, and now we have fallen into such filthy garbage!"

On another occasion at Girīḍi, at a conference, the president of the conference, a learned scholar, one Mr. Basāk, remarked after hearing Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's speech, "We thought for so long now that *Vaiṣṇava-dharma* was a branch of Hindu religion. But today, Mahārāj, after what I have heard from you, with your sound argument and Scriptural evidence, we know now that *Vaiṣṇava-Dharma* is the Original Religion—the *Jaiva-Dharma* or Religion of all souls—and all others are only the misconceived portion of the original."

In His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's own words: "This must be deeply studied and considered by the learned section. The *Vaiṣṇava-Dharma* that Mahāprabhu gave is the original *Vaidika-Dharma*. What Śrīla Rāmānujācāryya and Śrīla Madhvācāryya gave has completely merged into the Line of Mahāprabhu. And what Lord Śaṅkar, Lord Buddha, and Rāmkrishna Mission have given is all hodgepodge. One who can properly catch the gist of this is benefitted in the extreme. *Sambandha-jñāna* is a great thing; then there is *Abhidheya* and *Prayojana*. These are the essential three stages of the whole theology."

Once in Bombay, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave a lecture at the Theosophical Society. The subject of his talk was "The Superexcellence of the Teachings of Śrī Chaitanya". The president, in his introductory lecture, spoke the age-old dogma that all religions are one and the same. When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj took the stand to speak, he said:

"It is a very regrettable that I must first, in order to speak on my subject, announce that I completely disagree with the president. Because to even enter into my subject, the prerequisite is the comparative study in theology.

"I have come to speak on not only the excellence, but the *Superexcellence* of the Teachings of Śrī Chaitanya. Therefore, I am bound to show the subject of my delivery by surpassing all the lower

stages of soil. So, in order to have your attention, I am bound to first point out the president's gulf of difference in his opinion with me.

"*Sambandha*, *Abhidheya* and *Prayojana*—first we shall make these three divisions. *Sambandha* [relationship] will mean to first separate all other religious conceptions except for the *Vaiṣṇava-Dharmma* as given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu—Kṛṣṇa conception, the others all being concerned only with Brahma conception, Paramātmā conception, etc. *Abhidheya* is the means to the end; that we can hear from Śrīman Mahāprabhu to be *jñāna-śūnyā Bhakti* [Devotion unalloyed by intellect], *śuddha-Bhakti* [Pure Devotion], in *sādhū-saṅga* [association of the true devotee]. And *Prayojana* or the goal is *Prema*; but not *mukti* [liberation]. *Dharmma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* [religiosity, economy, material desire and liberation]—these are not the goal. Only *Prema-Sevā*, Loving Service to Kṛṣṇa is the supreme goal."

Seeing Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's sensitive, rich Sanskrit Writings, his Gurudev referred to him as 'a fit person to continue my Spiritual Succession'. Seeing his keen scriptural insight, his Gurudev also adorned him with the accolade 'Śāstra-nipuṇa Śrīdhara Mahārāj' or 'Scriptural Genius Śrīdhara Mahārāj.' On another occasion his Gurudev also referred to him as 'niveditātmā' or 'a pure soul fully surrendered unto the Supreme Lord'.

Just prior to departing this world he was fully satisfied to hear Śrī *Rūpa-maṅjarīpada*—his most beloved Song of the deepest Divine Service—from the lips of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupād, by virtue of this action, clearly illustrated that Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is his Chief Successor Preceptor and Representative of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupād, who is the Foremost Preceptorial Apostle of Śrī Chaitanyadev.

After the departure of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupād, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj founded the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in 1941. At that time, it was no more than a thatched hut on the banks of the holy river Ganges. At that time, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj composed this beautiful Sanskrit verse. The verse is a mysterious prediction, telling of the universal renown the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh was to know in the future:

श्रीमच्चैतन्य-सारस्वत-मठवर-उद्गीतकीर्तिर्जयश्रीं
 बिभ्रत्संभाति गङ्गातट-निकट-नवद्वीप-कोलाद्रि-राजे ।
 यत्र श्रीगौर-सारस्वत-मत-निरता गौरगाथा गृणन्ति
 नित्यं रूपानुग-श्रीकृतमति-गुरुगौराङ्ग-राधाजिताशा ॥

śrīmach-chaitanya-sāraswata-maṭhavera udgīta-kīrttir jaya-śrīm
 bibhrat sambhāti gaṅgā-taṭa-nikaṭa-navadvīpa-kolādri-rāje
 yatra śrī-gaura-sāraswata-mata-niratā gaura-gāthā gṛṇanti
 nityaṁ rūpānuga śrī-kṛtamati-guru-gaurāṅga-rādhā-jitāśā

In the Holy Abode of Transcendental Touchstone
 Śrī Nabadwip Dhām—the selfsame Śrī Vṛndāvan,
 in the land of Koladwip, whose inner identity
 is the King of mountains Śrī Govarddhan,
 near the charming shores of the Holy River Bhāgīrathī
 who delivers all the fallen souls
 stands that grand and glorious King of all Temples—
 Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh.

In that beautiful retreat, the surrendered devotees
 whose lives are the Message of Śrī Gaura,
 are eternally absorbed in the Loving Service
 of the Divine Master, the Golden Lord Gaurāṅga
 and the Loving Lord Śrī Govindasundar
 with His Consort Śrīmatī Gāndharvā,
 accompanied by all Their Beloved Associates.

With hearts always filled with good hope
 to attain the Grace of the Lord,
 following faithfully in the Line
 of Śrī Śrī Rūpa and Raghunāth—
 the Storekeepers of the Unlimited Treasure
 of Pure, Sweet Love Divine,
 those surrendered souls ever sing the unending Glories
 of the Transcendental Name and Qualities
 of the Most Magnanimous, Original Supreme Lord
 Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅgasundar.

Indeed, the hearts of all beings, moving and still,
 marvel in the Glory of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
 as they take shelter in the soothing, affectionate shade
 of the victory flag that flies aloft
 and sings wholeheartedly to the world the ever-expanding
 renown of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh;
 bearing that banner of all Transcendental Benedictions,
 Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh ever shines resplendent
 in all its Divine Magnificence.

[Rendered into English by Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī B.A. Sāgar, from the Bengali translation of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, after the departure of his Gurudev, naturally became unanimously honoured as the most exalted Representative of the Gauḍīya Succession; although he always, and openly so, considered himself as junior. By their requests, he conferred the holy order of *saṁnyāsa* upon many of his exalted, eminent Godbrothers, including Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keshava Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Āloka Paramahansa Mahārāj and Śrīla Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāj, Śrīla Nārasimha Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhāgavata Mahārāj, Śrīla Āchāryya Mahārāj, etc.

During a circumambulation Festival at Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj, the most senior preacher, and disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupād, personally worshipped Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj with one hundred and eight lamps, and incense, etc., on the occasion of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's Appearance Day. Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj performed this function joined by many of his disciples and other Godbrothers.

The Godbrother of His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupād, was, of course, the personality to inundate the Western world by cultural and spiritual tidal waves. From 1965 to 1977, he single-handedly transmitted the original Teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a global proportion. His Divine Grace Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupād was an unprecedented, magnificent Divine Phenomenon in himself. Yet, we

heard from him personally, and history has recorded it, that he had only about ten days of association with his Gurudev, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupād. But he had long and intimate association from his time of initiation all through, with the most intimate of all his Godbrothers, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj.

Later, when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was over 80, thousands of persons from all over the world took the pilgrimage to Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Math, in Nabadwip, India. He accepted some thousands of persons from all over as his disciples. And he handed their charge over to his intimate attendant and associate-servitor, and his personally selected successor, Āchāryadev Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. It is indeed the greatest fortune for the world that [at the time of this printing] Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, since 1992, has now completed his fifth World Tour, preaching the Religion of humility, selflessness, and tolerance. It is the fulfillment of the heart's desire of our beloved Master Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

As I mentioned in the beginning, the Ocean of the Pastimes of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is unlimited. How many drops of that ocean can a mere sparrow extract? In this world, time is not on our side. Ordered by my Gurudev, I have tried—in my own random way—to present some of these drops of honey for the bumblebee devotees of the Lord. I pray there is no offence in my doing so. If I do not try, that will also be an offence. Whoever hears the nectarean Divine Pastimes and Teachings of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj cannot but attain the Supreme Wealth of life itself—Love for the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Before closing this chapter, two other incidences suddenly come to mind.

After the disappearance of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupād, there were major struggles. They were always resolved and harmonised by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was loved by all. Once during that period, a very learned devotee personality who was considered an adversary of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, came to visit him. In fact, he had a habit of visiting Śrīla Guru Mahārāj quite often.

That day, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked him,

"You are supposed to be a member of the oppositionist party to me. Why are you always coming here to see me?"

That devotee personality immediately replied, "Because of your disinterested nature, super intelligence, and strong common sense."

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Bābājī Mahārāj often visited Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's birthplace Śrī Hāpāniyā. He would ask the villagers, did Śrīdhar Mahārāj study at school here? Did he bathe in this pond here? and so on, and so on. One day Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked him, "You are my Godbrother; why are you so often visiting my birthplace? What is the reason?"

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāj replied, "Because your writings are non-different from the writings of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. So I'm going there to take the dust of the land of your Pastimes on my head."

Centenary Year

শ্রীশ্রীগুরুগৌরান্দো জয়তঃ
All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Chapter Three

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj Remembers

[From a recorded conversation with His Divine Grace]

(Edited by Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj)

I was born at midnight, Saturday 10th October, 1895. Navamī tithi [lunar day] under the same sign as Lord Rāmchandra. Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa [dark moon fortnight]. Śrīman Mahāprabhu was also born on a Saturday. I was the second child. The first was a daughter, but she died early, so Rām *Kavach* [a protective *mantram* and amulet] was given to my mother for the protection of the next child, that is, myself. So I was born after my mother took Rām *Kavach*.

There were two thatched rooms, one of which was the maternity room. Because the first child had been lost, after I was born and my mother was still confined within the maternity area, just in the front of that place my two English-knowing cousins kept night watch to make sure that any ghosts or something like that may not come in the shape of a cat, or in any other way. So as they were reading and studying, they would protect the first half of the night. They were B.A.s studying for M.A. And during the second half or last portion of the night two Sanskrit students, one cousin and another an uncle, sat there just in front of that temporary shed, reading, to guard against any unseen attack at that time. They all kept night watch.

Then, as I remember, when I was a boy being carried on the shoulder of my father, there was going in the distance one *Saṅkīrtan* party; crying, I asked him to take me there. Anyway, to console me he took me there for some time and then came back.

I had a very good memory, especially in Sanskrit. I was taught a *śloka* in praise of Lord Śiva—प्रणमामि शिवं शिवकल्पतरुं, and I could chant that by memory. When I was one year eight months, my grandfather died, but I can't remember him. My earliest recollection is an earthquake. I was born in 1302, Mohammedan era, and 1304 in the month of Vaiśākh there was an earthquake. I was only a child then of one year and eight months or so, but I remember that. I remember the shaking of the earth, so many cows gathered, and so on—this is my earliest recollection.

Then, my first brother was born when I was three. I remember the scene of the birth of my brother, around August, 1898. I can also remember when I reached the age of five and I was engaged in studying writing, and I was given to my maternal uncle's house. Many things before that I can remember as well. And when I was in my maternal uncle's house, for three years for early education in a primary school, I got some help from one of my aunts who taught me *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. That helped me a great deal. Already I had some affinity for all those things, some type of intuitive knowledge and partiality to ancient mythological teachings and culture of the orthodox section. From very childhood my tendency was with the culture of the orthodox section—*Veda*, *Upaniṣad*, etc., faith in God—all these things.

At nine years I was admitted into high school [intermediate according to the current system in India]. As a student, there in the debating club I always sided with the ancient Śāstric culture, even against the teachers that took up the cause of the renaissance or reformation. I was always on the side of the previous culture. I fought with them, and I don't think they could defeat me. Then I got my sacred thread in the family tradition when I was fourteen years. I feel that my memory was more or less quite sharp. I could remember what I saw and heard in my early age.

I am told that I had a general tendency that if anyone would come to ask me something, I would reply, "No." Whatever would be asked of me, "No." But once, when one of our family-members, a scholar, went to appear for his examination, he came to ask me whether he would pass or not. I pronounced, "Yes." And he won a scholarship. Then I matricu-

lated from the local High School when I was fifteen years of age. I could write Sanskrit verse before that.

I like sacrifice in life. The magnanimous side. I had affinity for Lord Rāmchandra, for the model Pastimes, but not so much Lord Kṛṣṇa, because of His Vṛndāvan Līlā. I could not accommodate why God should be a liar and a girl-hunter. I could not accommodate this. Though I saw Rādhā-Govinda *Mūrtis* [Deities]—They seemed to be very, very charming. I found some mystic background there, but on the surface, I had more liking for Rāmchandra than Kṛṣṇa.

My attraction to Kṛṣṇa first came through *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and then through Mahāprabhu. I liked Rāmchandra for His magnanimity. I was mainly attracted by the self-giving ideal. So I liked Rādhārāṇī very much, I liked Mahāprabhu very much, but my attraction to Kṛṣṇa was less. My attraction to Kṛṣṇa came through Mahāprabhu and through Rādhārāṇī—from Their side. When I was nine or ten or so, there was a temple where Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities were installed in Jagadānanda Pur, near Kāṭwā. Every year in Kārttik month my father used to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there. Sometimes I visited that temple with him, and I found some mystic atmosphere there. It seemed very mystical to me.

After matriculation I went to Baharampur [District Mushirabād] for college study at the Krishnanāth College. There, with the company of one of my cousins, my maternal uncle's son, I came into connection with the East Bengal people, who were renowned, we had heard, for their boldness and sacrificing nature. I took residence in the same hostel as them.

Somehow, I had passed matriculation second division, [Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had suffered a very dangerous bout of malaria for a whole year at that time. —Ed.] but I passed I.A. [Intermediate Arts] in the first division. When we were studying in the local school, we had to do some family works along with our study. But now, from the hostel, I passed in the first division.

Then I was again admitted in that same college at Baharampur. After the fourth year we sat for the examination of B.A. When I was a student of the fourth year I came into the connection of a younger boy who had

just passed matriculation and was newly admitted into the college. In the college I found that there was a small section of students who were addicted to some meditation and *pūjā*, etc. And there was another group that did not care for worshipping, but they liked the service of patients, and to do good for the public. But I have an internal nature for both.

I was a fourth-year student and that boy was a first-year student—three years gap. I found that he was given to both sides very intensely; taking the Name of the Lord sometimes very loudly like a madman, and also doing *sandhyā-vandanā* [regular morning, noon and evening prayers and worship] etc. At the same time, when there was any patient he would engage himself in their service, even neglecting to attend the college class. Both sides—social service as well as worship were combined in him.

Before this, when I was in school I got a book where it is mentioned that if we can go on with the *japam* [meditational chanting] of Gāyatrī 432 times daily, we can achieve a very good spiritual improvement. I practised that for some time, and at that time I tried my best to understand the revealed truth—without consulting any dictionary or grammar; I had heard that Gāyatrī is conscious, spiritual, not dead words. So, if I go on with *japam* Gāyatrī itself will express its meaning and purpose. I approached it with that attitude, and I used to feel some light coming from the words of Gāyatrī itself; I had some knowledge about that for some time.

Then, as I said, I came in connection with that boy in college, and I tried to associate with him. His name was Śrī Suresh Bhaṭṭācāryya—he came from a *Brāhmaṇa* family of Faridpur. The founder of the Bhārat-sevāshram, Śrī Praṇavānanda, was from his village. Śrīpād Madhusūdan Mahārāj also comes from the same village—Bājepratāp-pur in the district of Faridpur.

One day, when we two were going on a morning walk and also cleaning our teeth with small twigs, he referred to his father with the expression, 'that gentleman.' I took exception to that.

"Why do you use this expression for your father? You say *that gentleman*? What is this?"

He said, "Yes, I have committed a wrong; I shouldn't have spoken in this way before you. But really it is like that. 'That gentleman'—he was

a gentleman, and in this life I came to him and he has protected me for some time, and in the next life I shall go to some other place; in this way we are moving hither and thither, coming to some gentleman and from there to another gentleman..."

Although I gave opposition, that point hit me very hard. I began to think, "Yes, it is true. We are in the midst of father, mother, brother, or, as he said, 'that gentleman'. What real connection have I with them, or they with me? We are all almost like strangers!" Thinking and thinking on this point the whole world became as vacant. I felt a furious atmosphere, with no shelter to take anywhere. A chaotic position, and I have no position of stability. Wherefrom am I coming, where to go, how long am I to stay here—this is a point in the infinite. *I am an uncertain point in the whole of the infinite.* A great shock came to me in this way. And that was the great turn in my life.

The worldly achievement has no value. I was studying, a fourth-year student. I was to appear in a few months for the final examination. My friends were alarmed at seeing my position. "What are you doing? You are neglecting your studies! How will you be able to pass? Your father is sending money [for your education]; you are not so rich."

In this way they tried their best to help me but I couldn't concentrate on any book of study. They said, "If you can't do so, we shall read and you try to hear." At that time, my friend gave me some literature on Mahāprabhu's Life and Teachings, and I devoured it like nectar. I found some position there—it is not that I am nowhere. Here is the support—the basis, the foundation; I found here the sustenance, hope and shelter I needed.

In this way I began to read and read. My very nature was that whatever I read, I read scrutinisingly. It may be slow, but my reading is more or less very accurate and representing the true aspect. I could also hear very clearly. Even without reading, acute hearing was also a part of my nature. Whatever I heard, I could grasp the very purpose and keep it within me. And here also by thorough reading I found my life, my future hope, everything. I was converted. In my mother's family there was some recognition of Śrī Chaitanyadev, but my paternal family were orthodox *smārttas*. They hated the followers of Chaitanyadev.

Chaitanyadev has created a chaotic society. Pests that cannot keep their own stand in the social position—it is they who gather to follow Chaitanyadev. Those who have lost their social position become Vaiṣṇavas and they say that they are followers of Chaitanya. In my father's family they held such a hatred. But after this I became fully converted into a follower of Chaitanya. Such a feeling came in me, not only intellectually, but in heart and mind also. I underwent a wholesale conversion.

Then my father died. He was disappointed and dejected. I was the eldest son; he had some hope in me for family matters, but when he saw such a change in me, it may be said that he died almost heartbroken. The burden of the family also came on my mind, but my state of mind was somewhere else. The chance came to me to lead a life of abnegation. For one year the son won't use any umbrella or shoes. I made some extreme addition—I used nothing but one piece of cloth and a sheet for one year. And half-mad I used to do agriculture work and service to the cows. Anyway, I passed B.A. The Baharampur section where I appeared, my classmates, said this was a wholesale massacre! Very few could pass, but somehow I passed. Some of my classmates said, "Oh, by the method of worshipping and satisfying God he has passed! He did not study at all but he passed, only by worshipping God." They said like this.

When my father died, almost with full consciousness he passed away—he told several things to me. One was that I would have to marry. I had never uttered a lie. Whatever the effect, I strictly spoke the truth. But I couldn't commit myself before him. So I felt pressured—'Whether you marry or not don't disturb me in this time of my death. Say that you will do it.' Anyhow, the expression came from me, "I shall try to fulfill your request." In this way, in a modified way, I answered him. Then anyhow, I had to marry. Married life continued for six years. In the meantime I went to study again in the law class. But the Gandhi movement of non-cooperation came forward and I joined the movement, because there was some sort of promise that 'within one year I shall give *svarāj* [independence] to you.'

I wanted to become a *sannyāsī*, but the countrymen want one year, so I thought I must sacrifice this for them. I left law college and worked for some time posted as a secretary of the movement here in Kālnā.

In this way, and sometimes in the village for two or three years. Then it was stopped for some time, and later I was wanted for service in Calcutta. With the help of a government office superintendent I got some vocation and I put up in Calcutta. I attended the office there.

My attraction stays always towards Mahāprabhu. In the meantime I wandered here and there searching for a *sādhū* from whom to take initiation. But I couldn't select anyone to my taste or satisfaction.

One day, I was returning from the office and I found a placard in Chittaranjan Avenue: *Gauḍīya Maṭh Mahotsav [Grand Festival] for one month*. The address was given, near the Pareshnāth Temple. I found this red-coloured placard. I thought, Gauḍīya Maṭh must be Mahāprabhu's followers, let us go and see what is there. When I was a law student, through Suresh Bhaṭṭācāryya I knew the founder of Bhārat-Sevāshram, Śrī Praṇavānanda, and he tried his best to take me into his mission; but I flatly refused.

"My head is sold to Mahāprabhu, Gaurāṅga, so I can't go anywhere else."

He said, "I also have great reverence for Mahāprabhu Chaitanyadev, but I think the first stage must be Buddhistic abnegation or *vairāgya* and indifference [to the world]. Second, Śaṅkar's *Vedānta* or *jñāna*. And the last and highest will be Chaitanya's *Prema*. Otherwise people will misunderstand that *Prema* for lust."

I replied, "Yes, what you say is alright—that Śrī Chaitanyadev's *Prema-dharmma* is the highest, above the Buddhistic and Śaṅkarite conceptions of theism. But Chaitanyadev has not told us, 'Go to the Buddhists and practice *vairāgya*, and then go to Śaṅkar and have knowledge of the *Vedānta*, and then come to Me.' He has told that 'wherever you are, take the association of a *sādhū* and you can take the Name.' "

He was silenced.

I said to him, "If you have got any supernatural power, I will be grateful if you can say where my spiritual guide, my Gurudev, is."

But he took the name of some gentleman, Haranāth. I went to search for him but could not find him. But this was when I found that placard and went to Gauḍīya Maṭh. There I found only one gentleman manning the outside hall, and the rest had all gone on procession of

Nagar-saṅkīrtan [congregational chanting in the town]. Then I had a little talk with that gentleman. I had studied somewhat about Chaitanyadev and other Scriptures, but I found that these people representing the Maṭh had deeper and more sound knowledge than I. Then, the party came back from *Nagar-saṅkīrtan* and I found Guru Mahārāj in front with his *daṇḍa* [mendicant's staff]. As soon as he reached in front of the Maṭh some disciple came and took the *daṇḍa* from him and gradually he was received there.

At first sight I found Guru Mahārāj's attitude was that of complete indifference to the ordinary world. He does not care for anyone, he is self-sufficient. I got that sort of impression from his first sight. Then I began visiting. Gradually I came to realize that I wanted to stay in such company.

Unfortunately I had been unable to find it before, but now the thought came to me, what's to stop me coming and staying here? I cast my glance homeward—father gone, mother living, three younger brothers—they won't be much affected. But my wife will be affected. I don't know why, but a sudden thought came in my mind that if she dies, I am free. This thought came. I was attracted by that association. There were so many members of gentlemanly and educated nature, and wholly given to the Service of Mahāprabhu. That attracted me most.

And it was that very day, I came to my quarter and found that my wife was ill. I came home that night, and after three days she passed away. My mother tried to have me married again, but she could not do so. And within six months she also disappeared in Haridwār at the time of the Kumbha Melā. She died there. One of my brothers, Satyen, was attending her with other pilgrims and sisters, etc.

I was free. I was visiting the Maṭh. I was thinking that I must cast my faith here, so I thought it necessary to know as much as possible about the mission; and to know the mission means to know the leader of the mission. So I tried to go upstairs to where Guru Mahārāj stayed. I would go in front of his room and sit there to hear, because I was thinking I shall join here. Then one day, it so occurred that Kīrtanānanda Prabhu, one *brahmachārī*, stopped me when I was making an attempt to go upstairs.

“Where are you going?”

“I’m going to Guru Mahārāj. I like it very much [to hear and associate].”

“No, never. You must stay here in the waiting room, and when you find anyone you will inform him who you want to meet. He will check, and when he returns with the answer you can go. Otherwise you must stay here. Never cross this threshold.”

A little harsh. Then I thought, ‘What should be the considerate nature of the *sādhus*? Why should there be any difference outwardly and inwardly? So I need not come here again!’

But at that very moment the position of Śukadev appeared in my mind. I had read in *Mahābhārata* that Śrīla Vyāsadev sent Śrīla Śukadev Goswāmī to Rajarṣi Janak to finish his education or *sādhana*. Śrīla Śukadev came, and he was detained for seven days at the outer gate. Then information went to Janak, who sanctioned, “Allow him to pass the gate.” The next gate, he was again detained. In this way, there were seven boundaries of the capital, and at each of the seven gates he was detained for seven days. So seven times seven means *forty-nine days* he was detained, and only then he could meet Janak. This thought came in my mind. And then the next concluding thought came, ‘If there is anything bad here, and they take me and put me onto a throne to worship me, I should not come here; and if there is real good, and they beat with a broomstick, I must not leave!’ That conclusion came in my mind, and I kept visiting.

Then one day, Guru Mahārāj was strolling on the roof just after having taken his afternoon food. Generally he did not take any food at night. I just approached, and took my stand in a corner. One man was attending him. Guru Mahārāj asked,

“যে কোন বক্তব্য?” — “Has he something to say?”

The attending person came and asked me, “Have you something to say?”

“No. I have nothing to say.”

He went back. “He says he has nothing to say.”

Then Guru Mahārāj said, “He has something to ask?”

He again came to me, and said, "Guru Mahārāj said, have you got something to ask?"

"No, I have nothing to ask."

He again returned to Guru Mahārāj. "He says he has nothing to ask."

Then again Guru Mahārāj put, "He has got some purpose in mind for coming here."

The person returned to me.

I said, "Yes, without purpose no incident can happen. When I have come, I have some purpose."

"What purpose?"

"To gain the grace of you all." That was my answer. "আপনার প্রসন্নতা।" Nothing else but that.

Perhaps that touched Guru Mahārāj. He approached me and enquired from me who I was, what I did, where was my home and so on. And then he said,

"Yes, you are fortunate. You are born in the area of Gauḍa-maṇḍal."

They had one booklet printed then and the attending person said, "Guru Mahārāj is offering this booklet to you."

I said, "I already have it."

He said, "That does not matter; with his good will he is giving this to you, so it is something else. You take it."

Then I took it on my head and accepted it. That was the first talk with Guru Mahārāj.

The following year I was invited to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Appearance Ceremony at Māyāpur. At that time I was visiting the Maṭh and hearing. I went there for the Ceremony. At that time my mother was also inviting me to the village Gumo where she was staying with my second brother. She wanted to see me before going to Haridwār, and the Gauḍīya Maṭh people were also inviting me to Māyāpur. I was in a dilemma.

What to do? It was my mother's call—and maybe the last. She might not live, her health was not good. This was the call. And I thought, I want to take *this* side in my life, so this side must be given preference. That is, I avoided the call of my mother to see her, and I went to the Gauḍīya Maṭh instead.

From their talks in general, I found that they do not care for the opinion of anyone else; but when anything is quoted from Scripture, they give a patient hearing. This was their nature. Summarily they reject all, they don't care for anyone, but they care only for Scriptural truth; that they soberly consider and evaluate. But with abhorrence they reject so many stalwarts of the then society—this Aurobindo, this Gandhi, this Ramkrishna, the [imitationist] Goswāmins—they summarily reject them all. But Mahāprabhu, *Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*—they are all-in-all. I had an attraction, a taste for them. I could identify with them.

Still, there was some sort of objection. One was that Guru Mahārāj comes from a Kāyastha family, that is considered *sūdra*, and I come from a *brāhmaṇa* paṇḍits' family of great honour in the society. Ostensibly, any *brāhmaṇa* should have been suitable; in this way some sort of objection was felt in me. Then, when I went to Māyāpur I again saw many things that touched me.

Śrīla Prabhupād was delivering a lecture to so many gentlemen who had come from Kṛṣṇanagar—educated persons. In another place the elderly Śrīpād Bhakti Pradīp Tīrtha Mahārāj was giving a lecture. Somewhere else Śrīpād Bhakti Svarūpa Parvāt Mahārāj was found writing receipts, collecting funds from the people. It was a hive of activity. I felt a transcendental, happy atmosphere there.

When the celebration was over, Guru Mahārāj was sitting in a canvas chair on the verandah of his room, and many persons were offering him obeisances and going home. At that time he was speaking, giving some discourse. I was always very eager to hear him. He was saying, “আপনারা আমাকে বঞ্চনা করিবেন না।”—“Don't cheat me, you people.” I was alert. What? Where was the question of cheating him? Why cheating?! Everyone was invited, they came, and now they are leaving; what was his point about ‘cheating’?

Then the next thing he said was, “You all came with the understanding that you will engage yourselves in the Service of Kṛṣṇa, and so I have entered into some relationship with you. And now, only as a fashion you have attended this ceremony and you are going home to engage yourselves in worldly affairs; but your assurance to me was that you would all serve Kṛṣṇa, but. . . disappointed. . .” Then he continued,

"You may say 'Oh, I have got some important business and after finishing this I shall come and join you as soon as possible' but no, no! If you tell me there is just a little fire and after extinguishing the fire you will return, then I say that is also not necessary. *If fire burns the whole world you do not lose anything.* Rather you are spared if you can disconnect from those things that are burnt. All your positive engagement, your inner hankering, has corresponding things in Kṛṣṇa. *All your necessities and hankering will be satisfied in the service of the Holy Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa, and nowhere else.*" He was speaking so forcefully.

I was wonderstruck. I thought, I would never hear anywhere in this living world such intense necessity for *Kṛṣṇa-bhajana*—so I must throw my head here. It was then that I took the decision that I must be a disciple here.

Before my mother died she had had some apprehension that 'he is my eldest son but he will become a *sannyāsī* without completing my *śrāddha* ceremony [last rites]; then who will do my *śrāddha* ceremony?' So when she passed, I went home and completed her *śrāddha* and after finishing that I came, in the last part of April, to join the *maṭh*. At first, I said that my two younger brothers would finish their studies and take to their vocations, and then I would come away [from the family and join].

But Śrīpād Bhārati Mahārāj and others said that I had a great opportunity.

They pressed, "No, no! Kṛṣṇa has taken your wife, and Kṛṣṇa has taken your mother. He has done enough for you. Really if you neglect to avail yourself of this chance, perhaps some other obstacle will come and this life will be spoiled with no hope."

I asked, "What are you saying?" They said, "Come immediately." I took that advice and joined immediately. I was living together with my two brothers in a hostel, and they came with me. They went back crying, I remained in the *maṭh*.

I stayed at the Calcutta *maṭh* for some time. I was requested to do some service in the press there, but I was not particularly inspired by the press work of proofreading, etc. I had much liking for the preaching—to go on *kīrttan* and preach. So, I was next sent on a preaching tour.

The first stop was at the Dumurkondā *maṭh* [in Bengal] and from

there to Benares, then to Vṛndāvan. There, there was *nagar-kirttan* for some time, then I was taken to Delhi where there was door-to-door collection for some time. Then Kurukṣetra *maṭh* was established and I was made *maṭh* commander there, and then I was alone. A small village-town and the place of Kurukṣetra. That is a solitary place except for during the solar eclipse when there is a great rush of hundreds of thousands of people. Doing collection, I passed about two or three years there. Then the Delhi *maṭh* was founded and I was in charge there. Then I visited Simla and other places for preaching.

Every year in August we had to come back to the Calcutta *maṭh* celebration for one month. So when I came back here I was taken by Śrīpād Bhakti Hṛday Bon Mahārāj and Śrī Hayagrīva Prabhu [later Śrīpād Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Mahārāj] in a party towards Madras side, installing the footprints of Mahāprabhu. Then again upon returning, the Bagh Bazaar Maṭh was opened, and from the original rented house in Ulṭā Dāṅgā the Deities were moved in procession in a chariot to Bagh Bazaar Maṭh, and a one-month festival was held there. After that Prabhupād went on that year establishing and installing those *Pāda-pīṭha* [footprints of Mahāprabhu] up to Maṅalgiri, near Bejoydā, Kobhur, and so on.

Then he went to Madras and declared the opening of Madras Gauḍīya Maṭh and put us there. We rented a house. Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj was the leader, and the senior *sannyāsī*. In the meantime I was given *sannyāsa*, recommended by Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj. He said about me, "He can preach well; he's a good preacher rather than a canvasser." I had a B.A., and I was known as Śrī Rāmendrasundar Bhaṭṭācāryya, B.A. My duty was to approach the people and introduce the *sannyāsins*, and more or less I had the work of a canvasser. But Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj said, "He's not a good canvasser but a good preacher. He can speak *Hari-kathā* very well." Then I was given *sannyāsa* in October, 1930, and after installing footprints of Mahāprabhu one by one in various places, Prabhupād opened the *maṭh* in Madras [as abovementioned], and we were left there and began preaching for three years or so.

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Mahārāj went to England for preaching, and I was in charge of Madras *math*. The temple was constructed almost in my time. Later, Bombay *math* was opened, and I was again taken there. I lived there for some time, and later was taken with the general party with Prabhupād. Staying most of the time with Prabhupād, we preached in different places of Bengal. At 5.30 a.m. on 1st January, 1937, Prabhupād left the world.

Before this, Prabhupād had wanted me to go for preaching to London, but I said, "I am not fit for this—I can't follow their accent, and I don't have the tendency to mix with them very closely. So you will spend money to send me, but I won't be able to show any satisfactory result. Of course, if you order me I must go, but I am just informing you what I am." Then he sent Śrīyukta A.B. Goswāmī Prabhu [later Śrīpād Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj] instead of me.

When Prabhupād become ill, I attended his sickbed. Just one day before his departure he called for me, and he asked me to chant *Śrī Rūpa-maṅjarīpada*. At that time I was not accustomed to leading the *kīrttan*. I was hesitating—Śrīyukta Kuṅja Bābu, later Śrīpād Bhakti Vilās Tīrtha Mahārāj, asked one *Brahmachārī* Prabhu, "You go on singing." Then he began singing, but Prabhupād felt dissatisfaction. He said, "I don't want to hear the tone or sweet sound. Then that *Brahmachārī* Prabhu stopped and I had to sing *Śrī Rūpa-maṅjarīpada*. And the others said, "Prabhupād has hereby given you admission to the *Rasa-sevā* section."

About one year before this, I composed a Sanskrit poem about Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Prabhupād was very happy with this. When I first read it to him, he remarked, "A very happy style." Next, I heard, he said to Śrīpād Śrauti Mahārāj, "This poem is so fine, it is not written by him—it is written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself, and has come out through him. It is so appreciable." Once, he said to Śrīyukta Aprākṛta Prabhu, "I'm satisfied that what I came to say will remain after me—I find in this *śloka* [verse] the *siddhānta* [perfect theological conclusion]":

श्रीगौरानुमतं स्वरूपविदितं रूपाग्रजेनादृतं
रूपाद्यैः परिवेशितं रघुगणैरास्वादितं सेवितम् ।

जीवाद्यैरभिरक्षितं शुक-शिव-ब्रह्मादि-सम्मानितं
श्रीराधापदसेवनामृतमहो तदातुमीशो भवान् ॥

śrī-gaurānumataṁ svarūpa-viditaṁ rūpāgrajenādṛtaṁ
rūpādyaiḥ pariveśitaṁ raghugaṇair āsvāditaṁ sevitaṁ
jīvādyair abhirakṣitaṁ śuka-śiva-brahmādi sammānitaṁ
śrī-rādhā-pada-sevanāmṛtaṁ-aho! tad dātum īso bhavān

“That which is the Gracious Gift of Śrī Gaurachandra, the deep, internal puport of which is known by Śrī Svarūp Dāmodar, that which is adored by Śrī Sanātan Goswāmī, and distributed by the *Rasa-tattvāchāryyas* headed by Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī; that which is tasted and enriched by Śrī Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī and followers, and tenderly protected by Śrī Jīva Goswāmī and his company; and that which is venerated from afar by the great personages like Mahādev, lord of the gods, and Brahmā, grandfather of the world—aho! marvel of marvels, that ecstatic nectar of the Exclusive Service of the Lotus Feet of Śrī Rādhā—you hold the perfect position to mercifully give even that to us.”

Before this also, I wrote an article for the spiritual newspaper Nadiyā Prakāśh, and Prabhupād remarked to Śrīpād Śramaṇ Mahārāj, who was the editor, “If you can gather this type of article to publish in your paper, the standard of your paper will be raised. Such articles are desirable to be published.” Anyhow, he appreciated my understanding and realization. There are many other instances.

Myself (Tridāṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī B.A. Sāgar): I heard that Śrīla Prabhupād praised you as *Śāstra-nipuṇa*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Oh. In Madras, in the ‘Gauḍīya’, Gauḍīya Maṭh’s leading weekly paper, there was published one *siddhānta*. The birthday of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī and the birthday of our Guru Mahārāj were mistakenly transposed. Both are *pañchamī* [fifth lunar day]. Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī’s is on *pañchamī* of the bright moon fortnight, and Prabhupād’s is on *pañchamī* of the dark moon fortnight. But they were transposed—Prabhupād to the bright fifth and Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī to the dark fifth. I read it carefully, and I thought the basis of the philosophising was wrong. Why has *Kṛṣṇa-śakti* come on the

bright moon, and *Gaura-śakti* on the dark moon? I found it should be just the opposite.

I showed it to Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj, considering it a grave error. He suddenly took up the pen and wrote a letter to the effect, "What is this? We thought that the editors have some touch with the reality and what they write has some real connection with the sentiment, but how can this sort of error be possible from them? Have they no *śrauta*-connection? All concoction!" So it was detected, and an amendment was published in a later issue.

When Prabhupād was there, the books "*Ray Rāmānanda*", "*Relative Worlds*" and "*Brahma-saṁhitā*" were published. It was mentioned that when Mahāprabhu went to Vṛndāvan He met Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana Goswāmins on the way. But I knew it clearly that He met them when returning from Vṛndāvan, so I objected. Anyway, I didn't take it to Prabhupād's notice, but it must have come to his notice that Śrīdhar Mahārāj detected all these things. On the occasion of his *Vyāsa-Pūjā*, Prabhupād delivered a written address, and there he mentioned before my name, "*Śāstra-nipuṇa Śrīdhar Mahārāj—he has very deep knowledge in the Scriptures*"; that was his consideration.

Myself: And about discovering the place of Śrī Rāmānanda Rāy?

Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj: Yes, when I was called from Uttar Pradesh to join the Madras party, before that my name was Śrī Rāmendrasundar Bhaṭṭāchāryya. But now he converted my name into Śrī Rāmānanda Dās, and with this name he sent me with a group to find out the place of the conversation between Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāy, and to install the *Pāda-pīṭha* [footprints of Mahāprabhu] there.

At that time I delivered a short lecture in Rājmaṁhendry about that conversation of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāy at Kobhur, and I heard from Śrīpād Kṛṣṇadās Bābājī Mahārāj that Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj was of the opinion that this speech was extremely appreciable, and that it contained the most precious Teachings. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Myself: That Temple where you installed the *Pāda-pīṭh* is still existing today?

Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj: Yes. During our time the Deities were installed by Prabhupād, but there was only that *Pāda-pīṭh mandir*. A separate

mandir was established after Prabhupād, perhaps by Śrīpād Bhakti Vilās Tīrtha Mahārāj.

Later, myself as a *sannyāsi* and Śrī Hāyagrīva Prabhu as a white-clad *brahmachārī*, who was later Śrīpād Mādhava Mahārāj, worked together.

Also, I collected funds from the Rājā of Jeipur [Orissa] for the Madras Temple. That is also a history. Their new I.C.S. was Mr. O. Pulla Reddy. He was appointed 'Dewān' [government official] of Jeipur. Because that is an *ādivāsi* [indigenous peoples] area, a special sort of rule was introduced there by the British. The Dewān is more powerful than the King.

We came from Madras with some recommendation from the officiating Chief Justice, Mr. Rameshan, to meet the Rājā of Jeipur. Then, the Rājā promised to pay the cost of the Madras Temple, but he kept requesting us, "Approach the Dewān, and he, and not I, will give you the money. So go and consult the higher. I am only giving my sign of approval, but the money will be paid by him. So meet him." I had heard that he was a half-atheistic man, so I was hesitant to approach him. I said, "No, you are King, you are master, so it is better that you will give the money", and so on, but he insisted again and again. "No. You will have to meet the Dewān."

But when I met the Dewān, it was just the opposite. The Dewān said, "Oh, I'm the last man to pay you this amount, ten thousand, to build the temple at Madras. If you would be building it here, then I could have some consideration; people here would have some recreation in the temple. But these poor people, half-fed and half-clad—if we get any money in excess, I must give an order for their help. Funds must be used for *that* cause, not for this luxury of constructing a temple; and that, too, is in Madras town. Go there and collect funds to construct your temple."

Then I thought this is a hopeless case, so drastic medicine must be applied. So I came out with this *śloka* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

विक्रीडितं ब्रजवधूभिरिदं च विष्णोः
श्रद्धान्वितोऽनुशृणुयादथ वर्णयेद्यः ।
भक्तिं पारां भगवति प्रतिलभ्य कामं
हृद्रोगमाश्वपहिनोत्यचिरेण धीरः ॥

vikrīṭam vraja-vadhūbhir idam cha viṣṇoḥ
 śraddhānvito 'nuṣṅguyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
 bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
 hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty achireṇa dhīraḥ

I said to him, "You want to help the *ādivāsīs*, and I also want to help them. But your help is in a particular way, and my help is in another way. It has been told in the Scriptures that to hanker for something [in this world] is a heart-disease. It is mentioned in *Bhāgavatam* by Śukadev Goswāmī, '*kāmam hṛd-rogam.*'

"I want this, I want that, I want thousands, I want millions—that is heart-disease, and not real. When I was a hog, I devoured a hillock of stools, but hunger is not appeased. When I was an elephant I finished a whole forest, but hunger is not finished.' So hunger can never be finished in this way.

"There are so many who have amassed millions, still they say, 'No, this is very little, I want more, more.' So this is heart-disease, and in the *Bhāgavatam* Śukadev Goswāmī has given the medicine for this. *Vikrīṭam*. . . when you can accommodate the Absolute to have His full, unrestricted play, and use His ownership with everything, every atom in the creation—if you can accommodate such a conception of the Absolute with the environment, then you can get out of this heart-disease. There's no other way.' "

The man was impressed. Tears fell from his eyes. "Swāmijī, I believe in God."

"Your eyes bear testimony to that."

"I shall pay your money. But not just now; go to Madras, I shall pay." He sent the money, and the Madras Temple was constructed.

My preaching was not that of the false canvasser, but straight dealing; dealing with the plain truth. Not any coaxing or indirect way, flattering, or by sweet words to somehow rob the man. Straight talk, straight dealing representation. My guide was, 'why have I come here?' What fascination brought *me* here? I tried my best to represent that fascination to them. 'This is the cause for preaching—you must appreciate such cause. I have got appreciation in this line, and I don't think that I

did wrong.' Every moment I think I'm justified to accept this principle and to march on, in this line.

After the disappearance of Gurū Mahārāj there were trustees appointed by him and he said to make a governing body.... But unfortunately for us.....there were many discrepancies and the mission could not be kept together.

Although I thought that I must try my best to purify the movement, according to my conscience, it was not to be so. So I thought I must leave silently. My principle wouldn't be to try to fight again amongst one another to purify the mission. That was my mentality. Others, stalwarts, could not tolerate the discrepancies and they were fighting.

I was somewhat still associated when there was a case, and some stalwart Godbrothers were jailed and the case went on. I couldn't leave like a coward, but after perhaps a year the case was finished, they were released, and I went to Vṛndāvan leaving the association of the Maṭh. I don't care for such fighting.

They tried their best to keep me with them but I said it was not possible for me to remain in the association of [what was now becoming] quarrelling elements. I stayed there at Govarddhan for a month, and completing the Ūrjā vrata there, I took Govarddhan Śīlā and came here and hired a house for two rupees per month. When I returned from Vṛndāvan I met my previous brother [my brother from my family], Maṇi Bābu. He was in the service of the railway. I asked him to give me ten rupees per month for a few months. He agreed and did so for two or three months, and with that I came here. Gradually the others tried to find out where I was. Finally they found me out and they began to visit me now and then. Whenever they came they would bring some gift or so.

Śrīyukta Śakhī Charaṇ Rāy secured this plot [where Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh stands today]. He purchased it with his own money. Here I began my 'heart-service' in a cottage. 1942 on Rathayātrā Day I entered that cottage with Govarddhan Śīlā. Before that I lived for some time with Śrīpād Keśav Mahārāj in that rented house, and sometimes in Midnapore Maṭh with high people like Śrīpād Yāyāvar Mahārāj, Śrīpād Mādhav Mahārāj and others.

But here I was separated. Only one person was with me, then after some time another person with a few gentlemen of Orissa came, and some other Godbrothers also came. Then Śrīpād Govinda Mahārāj, as a boy, Śrī Gaurendu Brahmachārī, and others came.

Śrīpād Kṛṣṇadās Bābajī said to me, "You please give attention to this Śrī Gaurendu Brahmachārī; he's very intelligent and qualified." I tried to give a little more attention to Gaurendu Brahmachārī, but others could not tolerate that. I wanted to help him by Sanskrit education, etc., but they could not tolerate that, and they gave a proposal that we must prepare a deed. By that time this building had already been constructed in 1943. Two persons who had stayed with me for some time now demanded a document naming three Godbrother trustees, two themselves and one of whom was to be myself.

I then asked according to which law it would be managed. They said by majority vote, which meant that whenever they combined they could do anything with me they liked. So I said, "I avoided remaining in the company of many respected *Samyāsins* and so many others. I came to live alone. That does not mean that you both will guide me. I can't accept this." They began to revolt and disturb. There was a compromise.

Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj and Śrīpād Mādhav Mahārāj came. There was about five thousand rupees in the bank, and another seven thousand or so was to be paid to them, and then I would be here with absolute proprietorship. Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj came to my help; he gave a loan of four thousand, and Śrīpād Yāyāvar Mahārāj and others collected some funds from different parts, then seven thousand was given up, and then from that time I am here. This is the history.

I do not go for preaching very often. I'm almost always sitting here, and I very rarely go out in the previous style. Śrīpād Mādhav Mahārāj was always very affectionately accusing me, "You are denying the educated section of the people. Sitting here idle, you are denying the people. You have quality and capacity to preach Mahāprabhu's Teachings, especially to the educated section, but you do not do so." Whenever he came he would always charge me. Almost every year, after completing the *Gaura-pūrṇimā* celebrations he used to visit me, and he

would charge me! And also, every year for his Calcutta Maṭh celebration I used to go and deliver lectures there. In this way, days have passed.

I first came to meet Śrīpād A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj in Allahabad when I was white-clad [before *sannyāsa*]. After that I came here [Bengal], and then went to Madras. It was probably just before 1930 when I met him at Allahabad. At that time he was an agent of Kārttik Bose Laboratories. He was taken to the Maṭh. Prabhupād was not there then. 1933 or so after *Vraja-maṇḍal parikramā* Prabhupād came back to Allahabad for laying the foundation stone, and at that time he met Prabhupād on a few visits and took initiation. You are already familiar with my relationship with him.

Centenary



Part 2

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—
His Holy Teachings

Informal discourses by
His Divine Grace

Selected from

Maṭh periodicals and other
limited-circulation publications.

Chapters 13 & 14 are from

'Absolute Harmony' (printed 1991)
edited by Prabhu Madhura Kṛṣṇa.



Chapter Four

Hearing to See

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Man proposes and God disposes. Proposal is directed upwards, and disposal comes down. The waves of suggestion and acceptance are all the Lord's *līlā*.

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho, nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsya sarvva-bhūteṣu, kaścid artha-vyapāśrayaḥ
(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 3.18)

"In this world, a self-realised person who rejoices in the soul does not accrue piety by the performance of actions, nor does he incur sin by abstaining from duties. Amongst all living entities, from the highest life-forms of the planet of Lord Brahmā down to the world of immobile organisms, he never depends on anyone for any personal demand whatsoever."

For one who is self-realised, any and every wave is welcome for he is able to read the deeper meaning.

rte 'rthaṁ yat pratiyeta, na pratiyeta cātmani
tad vidyād ātmano māyāṁ, yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.34)

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam asks, "What is the conception of *māyā*?" *Rte 'rthaṁ yat pratiyeta*—what seems to us to be the right reading of the environment, is actually not so. *Artheṣu abhijñāḥ*—the meaning and purpose of every incident is known to Kṛṣṇa. Many events are harmonised together and are for the purpose of serving Him. But when there is localised interest there is a clash. Imperial and universal interests clash with provincial and local interests. *Artheṣu abhijñāḥ*. He

alone can know why each straw is moving to this side or that. He is the only knower of everything.

Only He knows what purpose is served by the grass bending in the wind to this side, and not that. All these movements taken together in harmony, go to Him. *Artheṣu abhijñāḥ svaraṭ*. He is not responsible to anything or anyone.

The universal meaning of every event and incident, even the movement of a piece of straw, is all-purposeful and all-meaningful to the Absolute. It all contributes to the absolute satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. That is the meaning of the phrase, *ṛte 'rthaṁ yat pratiyeta*.

Artheṣu abhijñāḥ. *Artha* means *universal*. And what is the real purpose of every movement? It is for the one Universal Absolute. That absolute current goes towards the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. But that reading is not possible by the superficial *jīvas*. The *jīvas* cannot read or conceive the real meaning of everything. The *jīva* will have a different reading of the circumstances, but that will be superficial, and that is *māyā*. We may interpret in our own way the reason for an earthquake, or a storm, or anything, but that reading is from our local interest—the real meaning is hidden. This is *māyā*, and on the basis of that we are performing so many activities. All our interpretations are from the plane of local interest, so give it up!

sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

Give up your local interest and identify yourself with the current of that plane of universal interest.

ṛte 'rthaṁ yat pratiyeta, na pratiyeta cātmani

Without knowing the real meaning, what we feel and read is the wrong reading of the environment—it is *māyā*. We miss the universal purpose, and from local interest we read, "Oh, this is for this purpose, this is for that purpose." But this is local interest. What we conceive, feel, trust and believe, is not in consonance with the universal reading: it is *māyā*. Even our belief is within the realm of *māyā*. Our conceptions will have no standing in the interest of the Absolute.

What we read in the local interest, we will not find if we go to read from the universal interest.

Our disease of local interest and conception will be cured and removed when we see that everything is meant for Kṛṣṇa and we become one with that interest.

**rte 'rthaṁ yat pratiyeta, na pratiyeta cātmani
tad vidyād ātmano māyām, yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ**

That feeling, that conception, is known as *māyā*, "what is not." It is apparent, but not real. What is not real, that is *māyā*. Even what I think to be real, is not so. *Mā-yā*—*mā* means *no*, and *yā* means what—"what is not." Apparently it seems to be, but the fact is, it is not so: that is *māyā*. In such a plane we eliminate the infinite interest and instead we see things by measuring according to our own interest. We measure everything only from the angle of vision and stand-point of our own selfish interest. In this way we ignore the infinite representation, position, duty, and service. This is *māyā*.

Yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ—light and darkness both exist. The absence of truth is not truth: it is *tama*, darkness, ignorance, mistake, and error.

**aham evāsam evāgre, nānyad yat sad-asat param
paścād ahaṁ yad etac ca, yo 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham
rte 'rthaṁ yat pratiyeta, na pratiyeta cātmani
tad vidyād ātmano māyām, yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ
yathā mahānti bhūtāni, bhūteṣūccāvaceṣv anu
praviṣṭāny apraviṣṭāni, tathā teṣu na teṣv aham
etāvad eva jijñāsyāṁ, tattva-jijñāsunātmanaḥ
anvaya-vyatirekābhyām, yat syāt sarvatra sarvadā**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.33-36)

The ontological base of the whole *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is contained within these four *śloka*s[†]. The Lord is present everywhere in a direct or indirect way.

[†] See Appendix for translation.

One in the *uttama-adhikāra* (highest) stage makes no attempt to preach. Distribution of propaganda is for those in the *madhyam-adhikāra* (middle) stage. It is there to take everyone from the narrow conception to the bright conception—from the improper to the proper conception, *sambandha-jñāna*—and they will carry out their activities accordingly.

**siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa
ihā haite kṛṣṇa lāge sudṛḍha mānasa**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, Ādi 2.117)

To engage us more earnestly towards service sometimes hearing is necessary. To hear just for the sake of hearing, is luxury. But hearing for engagement, that is proper hearing.

The master calls. "Oh you, please bring me a glass of water." But the student remains sitting. "Did you hear me?"

"Yes, I heard." But still he remains sitting tight—that sort of hearing won't do!

There is a saying amongst the *sahajiyā* section: "Gurudeva asked for a glass of water, but I am engaged in *Harināma*. 'No, Gurudeva, I'm engaged in *Harināma*.'" This is self-deception.

Especially in the beginning, the importance will be the consideration of urgency. In Gurudeva *bhajan* will be present as service in a higher degree, not in us. By serving him I can partake in the higher quality of *kīrttan*, and that can come within me and improve the quality of my *bhajan*. *Sādhū-saṅga* and *Nāma-kīrttan* are important. *Nāma-kīrttan* has been recommended, but not without the association of the *sādhū*. That *sādhū* will be the higher, superior quality devotee, and *sādhū-saṅga* means serving him. *Saṅga* does not mean just bodily association but *saṅga* is possible only through the serving attitude—not by opposite dealing or idly sitting. *Saṅga* means *sat-saṅga*.

**dadāti pratigrhnāti, guhyam ākhyāti prcchati
bhuṅkte bhojayate caiva, ṣaḍ-vidham priti-lakṣaṇam**

(*Upadeśāmṛtam* 4)

These are the six kinds of association[†] with a *sādhū*. Higher association is only possible with a serving attitude, otherwise there is no *saṅga*. Lower association means exploitation and enjoyment, but higher association can only be achieved through service. By proper association the quality of your service will increase, so *sādhū-saṅga—sādhū-sevā*—is of most importance.

The Gauḍīya Maṭh stresses the importance of *sādhū-saṅga*—serving the *sādhū*. Whatever you do by the command of the higher devotee will, through him, surely connect you with a higher conception of the Absolute. Whatever you do, do with that connection from above and carry out his order.

We have the experience of one *sannyāsa* Godbrother who, leaving the order and engagement of his Gurudeva, went to the holy place of Badarik Āśram, and our Guru Mahārāj punished him for that. So, we can see that without the order from above, even going to the holy places may be punishable.

Without *sādhū-saṅga* we cannot connect with the higher level. Therefore even chanting the Name may not be *Vaikuṇṭha-nāma*.

**ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi, na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau, svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ**

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.234)

So the universal necessity is to learn and acquire a serving attitude, and if that is applied to *Nāma-bhajan*, or any *bhajan*, that will be of great help to you.

Jihva means the tongue, and *nāmādi* means the *nāma*, *rūpa*, *guṇa* and *līlā*. On the tongue the Lord's name (*nāma*) will appear; within the eye, His form (*rūpa*); within the mind, His qualities (*guṇa*); and in the heart, His pastimes (*līlā*): all these will come down to you, and everything about you will connect with that *Vaikuṇṭha-tattva*.

So it is not just a question of increasing the quantity, but the quality must be present. To be real *bhakti*, *sevonmukha* and *sevā* presuppose

[†] Offering gifts in charity; accepting gifts in charity; revealing one's mind in confidence; enquiring confidentially; accepting *prasād*; and, offering *prasād*.

surrender, and all this presupposes *sādhū-saṅga*. It all originates from the association of a *sādhū*. From the positive direction it can come to us, so we must be thankful to that positive source. The Lord is there, but His grace is coming through His agents. So His agents should be welcomed and dealt with properly.

Whatever we can collect with our energy we should devote towards *sādhū* and *śāstra*. *Sādhū* and *śāstra* are our two friends everywhere.

My Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupād, one day explained what is a *sādhū*, and what is *karmma*. He then proceeded to explain that if a *sādhū* orders, "Bring me a flower," but when you bring the flower he says, "No, now bring me some water," and you object, "No, you ordered a flower and I brought it. Please accept this flower," that will be *karmma*.

The *sādhū* is free. To thrust upon him his previous desire will be *karmma*. At every moment he is free, so to follow his past will, will be *karmma*. Always you are to be expectant for the immediate need.

In the battlefield, if the General orders the army, "March this side," then after noticing the circumstances to have changed he says, "No, go this other way!" Then it won't do for the soldiers to object by saying, "No! You have already ordered us to go in *this* direction."

Similarly the *sādhū* and Guru are always free, and their order should be taken in such a way. It is not that we shall stick firmly to their first order, but they are living and independent.

On being asked to do a particular service, one disciple told our Guru Mahārāj, "I need to know my programme of what to do at least one week in advance." But Śrīla Prabhupād replied, "But I received the order only five minutes ago, so how could I inform you earlier?" So, it is not a dead matter.

Of course, the beginners will not be able to accept that. They will receive their specific instructions just as a young boy is given the duty to every day practise writing the alphabet, "ABC...". That is a particular stage, but then he will be taught how to spell by using those letters in a certain way. And presently at every moment he will be using the letters in many ways according to the necessity of writing.

The order may come to take down a dictation, to write this and that. Just repeating "ABC..." is not sufficient.

So, in the beginning of devotional life the student is asked, "Do this thing. Do that thing." But when he will come in connection within the living substance he will be prepared in such a way for a new order to come, and he will have to follow that with all alertness.

When I was in Vṛndāvan I had a desire to meet with one *sādhū* who was the most famous and respected *siddha-bābājī* of that place. I had the chance to stay with him for a few days but my Śrīla Prabhupād, after circumambulating Vraja Maṇḍal, told me he was a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*. He explained that this *bābājī* was only copying as a student what are accepted as the practices of a *sādhū*. He was following the stereotyped direction. He was chanting the Lord's Names, doing *mādhukarī*, fasting, reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and performing the various formal duties recommended for the beginners, but he was not coming in contact with the living thing. He was simply undergoing training. He was simply following the training period.

In the armed forces when the new recruits are in the training period, they are asked to do something repeatedly. "Do this! Do this! Do this!" So they engage themselves in that way.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* does not know the spirit and therefore cannot connect with the living substance. He therefore is in the preparatory life of a devotee and he will repeatedly engage in those practices.

Anyhow I had already gone to see this *bābājī* two or three times in the evening. I sat there silently. He had many disciples there who respected him, with two or four staying by his side. Nobody said anything to me and he could not tell that I was from the Gauḍīya Maṭh. I tried my best to read him.

On one occasion that I saw him, it was the holy *Nṛsiṃha-caturdaśī* day, and a reading from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was begun. He recited, and sometimes he spoke about various things. I continued my watch over his activities, movements, etc.. As I watched him it was sometimes as if I was noticing Guru Mahārāj indicating to me that *bābājī's* nature.

After two or three days I came up with the conclusion that this man was trying his best from this plane to go up. But our Guru Mahārāj has come down *from* there and has a living programme with a purpose to fulfil. He does not belong to this world, but he has come from the spiritual world with some order. Our Guru Mahārāj has come down with something positive to give to the world. He has some order and plan: "Go and do this!"

But that *bābājī* was trying his best to follow what has been recommended in the Scriptures. We can read about Rūpa, Sanātan, and others, and accordingly have some idea and try to practise that. But that is theoretical practising: "This has been recommended, let me practise all these things and then I will get my desired result." One who follows in this way is a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*. But the desired end and living result will come by working under the direction of Gurudeva and *sādhu* who are already members of that plane. And that is not theoretical, but practical. The difference is there in the practical necessity.

In this way I had also come to the conclusion, later to be confirmed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, that this *bābājī* was a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*.

Soldiers are sometimes ordered to do ordinary things—not only fighting but also shovelling, clearing jungle, and many other duties. When marching against the enemy, whatever duty will come in their front, they are to do that. The circumstances are practical and living. It is not mock-fighting, but a real fight, and at every moment they are not always fighting. The preparation to a fight has more value than fighting in a mock-fight during a training period, even though the mock-fight seems like real fighting.

When the soldiers in the actual field find it necessary to do some other duties such as clearing the jungle, making a bridge, or a path etc., that will have more value than a practice fight in peaceful circumstances.

Of course the position of the General—of the Gurudeva—is all-important: he must be real, not a sham or imitation. If the *sādhu* or Gurudeva is genuine, to clean up his stool and urine may fetch more than worshipping the Deity. That is because such activity has a

practical connection. So, under the guidance of a real *Ācāryya*, whatever we do—whether it be cooking, looking after the cows, personal service, or so many other duties—that will have more value than my independent reading of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That is possible because the *Ācāryya* is actually leading spiritual life and he has his mission to do, and if we can help *him* that will fetch some higher result for us. And I will be paid by *his* coin, and not by any gross thing.

Centenary

Chapter Five

The Guide

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Questioner: I wanted to enquire as to how to recognise Guru, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj (Śrīla Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj): We receive confirmation from our heart's approval, our inner approval. We must trace it to there because that took me to my Guru. Guru is all in all, but who took me to my Guru? It was my inner sentiment, my inner guide. It did not like anything else in the environment but instead selected that advice.

Many others do not care to come here, and many may ridicule this life, but what made *me* come here? I cannot deprecate that internal approval, consciousness and sincerity. Therefore that is an important factor and ultimately we have to depend on that internal consciousness the most. When collecting advice from the Scriptures and when seeking or relying on advice from a *sādhū*, the only thing that takes me there is my internal approval, my inner friend. If it were not for that I would not have come. Indeed, so many others do not come. So who has taken *me* to this plane?

na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd, durgatīm tāta gacchati

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 6.40)

One who sincerely wants real good can never be deceived. When one is a real seeker of the truth, he can never be deceived. Kṛṣṇa says: "My dear boy, one who is sincerely hankering after the truth can never come across misfortune. If apparently some misfortune comes to visit him along the way, that is to enhance his position for his improvement."

Some sort of danger may come on our way but if we are sincere it will be as a test to us and when we will overcome that, it will be an addition to our glory. The temptations will be rejected and disarmed—but they will plead for us again.

So sincerity—sincere hankering after the truth—is needed if we are to go further. And that is made of *sukṛti*—the grace of the divine agents who, by their nature, are wandering through this cursed land to help others who may not even know they are being helped.

Questioner: What are *śravaṇa-daśā* and *varaṇa-daśā*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: *Śravaṇa-daśā* is when one is satisfied by first hearing the philosophy, teachings, etc., during probationary life. When one is satisfied with *śravaṇa* he then comes to accept a guide, a Guru—and that is the stage of *varaṇa-daśā*. He has the mood, “Now I am prepared to take formal admission in this line, and accept you as my leader. Now whatever you say, I must obey.” That is *varaṇa-daśā*.

At first there is acceptance of a clan such as Christianity, Mohammedanism, etc., to which someone has been introduced. After first accepting a creed, a person will be selected who will be able to satisfy me according to the principles of that creed. He will be able to give me the desired end of life. He is Guru. First the creed is accepted, then the guide.

Then beyond *varaṇa-daśā* begins *sādhana-daśā*. *Sādhana-daśā* is the third stage, and it means to follow the practices under the guidance of our Guru. By following that we shall gain some realisations and attain a tangible position: “Yes, I feel that what was in the words and propaganda is now in my heart. My heart feels its touch.” And that stage is called *prāpana-daśā*. Only after being thus established is one able to also distribute such things to others, and that stage is called *āpana-daśā*. Without being established in *prāpana-daśā*, only with the help of someone who is established there can we go to preach.

Questioner: Are there five stages?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: *Śravaṇa*, *varaṇa*, and *sādhana* are within this camp. Then comes *prāpana*—the tangible feeling, the position of oneself experiencing the thing—attainment. First we come in touch

with that reality, then we become established in that real plane, and then we shall be able to distribute it to others—*āpana*.

Questioner: When we have inner conviction, are we then safe? Also, does the external Guru help us to contact the *Chaitya-guru*, the internal Guru?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: The external Guru—*Mahānta-guru*—not only helps us to contact the *Chaitya-guru*, but he helps to prepare us so we can infallibly read the direction of the *Chaitya-guru*. At first in a raw way we may receive direction from the *Chaitya-guru*, and that draws us to the *Mahānta-guru*. With the help of the *Chaitya-guru* we come to the *Mahānta-guru*. The *Chaitya-guru* helps us in a raw way, in a general way which is not very systematic and clear.

Coming to *Mahānta-guru* we feel, “Yes, with the help of my *Chaitya-guru* my internal hankering has been satisfied.” Then with the help of our *Mahānta-guru* we come to find that clear direction in our *Chaitya-guru*. They are helping one another. By the help of the *Mahānta-guru* our ability to read the *Chaitya-guru* becomes more clear, more skilfully developed. Our reading of the innate *Chaitya-guru* becomes more clear as we become cleansed of the different thoughts and ideas mixed up from *yogīs*, *jñānīs*, *karmīs* and so many other different sections. The *Chaitya-guru* will give us more adherence to the *Mahānta-guru*, and in this way they each help the other.

After receiving help from the *Chaitya-guru* we come to *Mahānta-guru*, but sometimes it may also happen that after accepting *Mahānta-guru*, the *Chaitya-guru* again becomes covered. The *Mahānta-guru* will then take the disciple and help him cleanse the dirt that has covered his *Chaitya-guru*. The *Chaitya-guru* may become buried by some *anartha*, or some *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* but the *Mahānta-guru* will come to give relief.

Sometimes many may join the Mission and then go away. But the Guru does not allow them to easily leave. He tries his best to bring them back again and to a firm understanding: “Why have you gone away in order to search for other things?”

“The desire for money and the attraction of free mixing with the ladies disturbed me and drew me away.”

If the *Mahānta-guru* is genuine he will say that these particular desires should be removed. They are not the real objectives. For the good of the disciple he will explain the temporary nature of any connection with such things and how minor they are, and again try to reinstate him.

Some dirt may enter someone, but by the grace of the Gurus the dirt will be cleansed in no time and he will return to the real path.

"Don't disturb yourself with these little, tiny, filthy things. Don't go away in this way." Many immature and unfit persons may join the Mission, so it is not impossible that some sort of *anarthas* may come again to attack. It is like a fight. Sometimes one party gains ground, and sometimes that same party is losing. And ultimately the real party will win the battle. It is a battle. In everyone's heart there will be a battle because we are *sādhakas* not *siddhas*—we are not fully realised souls, but we are following the process to realisation.

Sometimes the devotees may feel defeated, and sometimes may even go mad. But on the whole they shall have to make progress. Therefore some sort of consideration and generosity should be allowed.

We should think that we are in a hospital where there are so many diseased persons. This is not a place where all the healthy people live—it is not possible. We are also patients and there are so many other patients. Patients are of different types: some may even die, and some may have a relapse. But ignoring all these facts, with real interest for my own health I must go on with the help of a doctor. Taking his help by following the proper prescribed medicine and diet, I will be cured. Just because so many others are getting worse or dying, does not mean that my own health must also deteriorate.

Another example is that in a school, all may not pass the examinations. Many will fail, but still a determined student must go on. We should not be discouraged from following the path of our eternal benefit just because of some unsuccessful candidates. I should not be cowed down by seeing this. I must be wakeful to the fact that this is my vital and only interest. I cannot just leave and go away.

Everyone may go, but I must fight single-handed with the enemy. All may fly away, but, because this is my vital interest, I will stay

and fight single-handed with self-determination. Why? "Because I have already understood and realised this to be my vital interest, so I cannot go back." If even once we find this to be deeply rooted within our heart, such determined resolve must come from within. We will find this to be the very thing we were searching after.

Questioner: Can a patient also become a doctor?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. When he is fully cured, has studied about medicine, and has undergone the necessary education of a doctor, he may become a doctor.

It is necessary to be qualified and also appointed. You see, first of all it is necessary to be qualified, then by the appointment of the higher administration you can become a doctor in the hospital.

You may engage in private practice if you are qualified, but to become a doctor in a hospital you must have some sanction from above. In this way a *sādhū* can give assistance in several ways, but the *Ācāryya*, holding a big position, should have sanction from above. And that is *prāpana-daśā*.

Questioner: Who will decide whether the patient is qualified to be a doctor?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: External sanction is not necessary by letter, but he is to be already awake and fixed in the internal world. Inspiration will come from the internal world: "The people are suffering, and you have the medicine. You should distribute the medicine to the patients." This may be seen in a dream, but while awake also, internal inspiration will come to you, and, because you know the medicine and you know the symptoms of the disease, irresistibly you will advance to help the patients. You have the medicine and you cannot but engage yourself in treating them. You will see this more clearly than daylight, more really than this world of experience.

People are suffering but you have the medicine. You used that medicine and you were cured. Now you find another to be suffering from the same disease. You have the cure in your hand, so why should you not apply it? What explanation do you have not to do so?

It will not be for making money that you will give the medicine,

nor for fame, but it will be due to the internal urge to help them. And you will find that the noble predecessors have also asked you to do so:

yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Madhya 7.128)

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu instructed, "Whoever you meet, try to rescue them by talking to them about Kṛṣṇa." If there is a ditch and you see a man about to blindly fall into it, will you not try to save him? It is a natural feeling. When it is plain, so very plain that it will happen, but you don't help him, then you will be responsible. This common sense may be applied. But we must be sincere.

The danger is that we must not be motivated by money, fame, or any worldly gain. *Kanak*, *kāminī*, and *pratiṣṭhā* are the three main disturbing elements that misguide us and draw us from this side to that. But when we are free from them, the street we walk shall be broad and clear.

God is good, and you will like to see everyone becoming good by getting God. God is good and God is great. When that superior type of thinking will be clear to you, all your activities will be controlled only by that one principle of life. And with that you will go on helping others with the firm faith that this must be given to all: "This is very tasteful. Please come to a safe position away from the danger-zone, and you will become happy." The tasteful medicine will make people happy, and if that is actually in your possession you cannot but feel the urge within to help others.

With real knowledge all the general questions such as where we are to go, how to go, and why we should go, are to be solved in order to help others.

'ke āmi,' 'kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya'

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Madhya 20.102)

Who am I? Why am I troubled? And how can I achieve my desired end? These fundamental problems should be solved, and if you have the solution you must give it to others. "My friends, come and solve your problems!" That will be the mentality of a preacher—and found very intensely in an *Ācāryya*.

Questioner: Someone may have a sincere urge, but he may not be completely aware of the danger, and he himself may become infected.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: The proper path follows a fine strategy: with the help of a higher agent he may approach, otherwise not. Without the help of a higher agent he will be nowhere, he'll be lost. When he goes to cure a patient, if he will not be able to cure him, then the patient's germ will attack him and he will also die with the patient. In that case he won't be of any help and he should not approach. He should inform the higher doctor and ask for better medicine to help his serious patient. In the case of doubt that, "With my meagre medicine and meagre instruments I may not be able to cure this patient," one should not venture to approach the patient, but instead he will appeal to the doctor of a higher position. This is very reasonable.

Following Mahāprabhu's advice to help others, still it may be found in rare cases that the doctor approaches with a good heart to cure the patient, but he himself dies. It is also not impossible, but not desirable.

When an organised party approaches for relief-work, some soldiers may be sacrificed before obtaining victory. The victorious party will also have to incur some loss when fighting with the enemy. Similarly, in the Mission some soldiers may be asked to approach the rich men, and the women, therefore sometimes some may be lost. But their loss will be for the time being, and again they will come back. We expect them to come back again because once someone has a taste, he will not be able to forget that.

**nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti, pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam apy asya dharmasya, trāyate mahato bhayāt**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 2.40)

Whatever has been acquired is eternal—it cannot be destroyed.

kaunteya pratijānīhi, na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 9.31)

The assurance is given by Kṛṣṇa: "Even if he has come to Me only for the time being, he has taken some medicine before leaving, so he ultimately must come to Me again."

Chapter Six

Specific Service

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Questioner: The disciple sees his Guru as absolute, but others may see the same person in a relative conception. So, is the Guru relative or absolute?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Generally, the advice is that in the beginning the disciple will look towards his Guru as the representative of the Supreme Lord Himself. But when he makes some progress and inner enlightenment begins, he will gradually find that Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute, has a particular system—an organic whole—and He has His potencies of different varieties. According to the disciple's inner awakening, he will have fitness for a particular class of service. That will be considered and he will be taken, under guidance, into that particular type of service.

When one sees his Guru, gradually, according to his innate capacity and quality, he will find *dāsyā-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa*, *vātsalya-rasa*, or *madhura-rasa*. The government grants the service. He will face some examination, some test, and he'll be put in a particular department where he will find his immediate boss under whom he will serve and be guided. That is the general situation and he will find his maximum gain there.

At first the whole system is as if one. Then a devotee will find himself in a particular part of that system arranged according to his fitness and awakening. Then finally he will be posted as a servitor to a particular Guru under whose guidance he will do anything and everything required of him.

At first Guru is seen to be Kṛṣṇa Himself, and then he will be seen in a further way. Rādhārāṇī and Yaśodā are heading their particular

sections, and in *madhura-rasa* the *paramparā* comes via Rūpa Mañjari to our Gurudeva.

There is oneness—unity—but more efficient service may be drawn from a particular point rather than a higher point. Everyone has their particular capacity in service and if they serve from there they will be best utilised. If located in a higher circle for which he has no such fitness, enmity will be created and he will be the loser. Do you follow?

Questioner: It is still not so clear to me.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: *Ācāryyam mām vijānīyāt* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27)—In the beginning stage we are told that the *Ācāryya*, the Guru, is Kṛṣṇa. Then Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī, the *Ācāryya* of *prayojana*—the ultimate goal—, says that the *Ācāryya*'s position is not that of God Himself, but it is that of His most favourite—*mukunda-preṣṭhatve*. Ultimately we find that Kṛṣṇa's dearest is in the department of His potency, and that is Guru.

We have to harmonise between these two approaches.

sākṣād-dharitvena... kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
(*Śrī Śrī Gurvaṣṭaka* 7)

In the beginning it is mentioned in the *śāstra* that Brahma means the Absolute as a whole, but by clearer vision we see that there are Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, Rāmacandra and so many Forms of the Lord. And by even clearer estimation we will find Kṛṣṇa to be within.

One time when Kṛṣṇa was in a conference with Lord Balarāma and Uddhava, they saw a mass of light approaching them. Then after a little time a figure became visible within that mass of light. Then after the light mass approached even closer, they could see the figure of a male person. And when closer still, they could see, "Oh, this is Devarṣi Nārada who has come."

In this way from far off you may get a conception of the whole, just as by viewing the Himalayas from a distance you can see many things. But as much as you approach, you will find just specific parts, but with more clarity. And when you actually arrive, you will find your Lord and your friends, and you will mix there. At that time you do not find the *whole* of the Himalayas, but you are located in a particular posi-

tion. And there, not with the whole, you will find that the desired end of your life has been fulfilled.

Similarly, when you approach Kṛṣṇa from afar, He is *sat, cid, ānanda*—He is infinite. Then as you approach Him, because you are small, you will be located in a particular position. In this way according to your fitness you will be taken into a particular position of service. There you will engage in whatever service is required of you, and from there you will draw the fullest satisfaction of your nature.

Guru means *guide*. At first we are guided by attraction to “whole-sale” Bhagavān—Kṛṣṇa—and this helps us to make progress towards Him. Then the more we gain, the more the big hazy vision is eliminated and a particular place becomes more clearly revealed. In this way our vision, actions and everything about us will become located in a particular part of the Infinite. And by carrying out my specific duty there, we will draw our highest benefit.

In the department of *rasas*—*śānta, dāsyā, sakhyā, vātsalyā, madhura*—you shall gain admission in a particular section of service according to your capacity. In each *rasa* there are also so many subsections and different departments of service, and according to your innermost fitness and capacity you shall be given a place there. Ultimately you will be told, “Do your duty here!” and you will see to that duty. Whatever your immediate guide, your *Guru*, asks you to do, you will do that and thereby receive your best benefit. Religion is proper adjustment.

There are so many *Ācāryyas*, even in the *Gauḍīya* Mission. You have come to your particular *Guru* in the Mission and under him there are many different departments of service. Some are selling books, some are delivering lectures, and so forth, and according to your own fitness you are given service in a particular department. But still you are in connection with the whole Mission. Wherever you are posted you are connected with the whole, but you have your specific duty in a particular place.

You joined the *Gauḍīya* Mission but it is a huge thing, with so many departments, so many *maths*, and so many duties, but where is

that Mission? At first it is a hazy thing, a big thing, then after you were admitted you were taken in and placed in a particular direction. Your attention was directed towards some post, you went there and gradually you were given some duty to discharge. The whole of the Mission is yours, but still you have a particular department and a particular duty, and that will increase more and more. It is possible that you may become the personal secretary of your Gurudeva, or a preacher, or a cook for your Guru Mahārāj. And some may be asked to go to other places to preach. Sometimes those may be dangerous places for the devotees, but someone also has that kind of duty.

Adjustment is necessary. First there is entrance within a Mission, then adjustment begins. Religion is proper adjustment according to the fitness of the man who is given admission. Do you follow now?

Questioner: I follow, but I still have some query.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: What query can you still have?! You will be placed according to your fitness and necessity. Necessity is of different types, and according to your fitness you will be given a particular duty. What difficulty is there in understanding this? Proper adjustment means that you are approaching the infinite, but you cannot swallow the infinite within you. You are detached, you are infinitesimal, and you are approaching the infinite, so you have to be located in a particular position of the infinite. You are to adjust in this way. You cannot devour the whole of the infinite within your belly. Do you like the idea of devouring the whole of the infinite within your belly? Therefore you have to be located in a particular infinitesimal position, and you will draw the maximum remuneration from that. If you are in some other place you will be the loser. According to fitness, adjustment comes to us. It is quite reasonable, and our duty is to pay full attention there.

Chapter Seven

The Willing and the Able

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Devotee: When we play a recording of our Gurudeva, are these sound vibrations actually transcendental or does the sound have to be heard from the person directly?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: When I joined newly I was sent with a particular *sannyāsī* to Benares. I appreciated his explanation of the Scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One day he told me, "Now the atmosphere here has been created in such a way that if I am ordered to construct a centre of our own, purchasing land, etc. then I can do, but that won't be sanctioned by the authorities, because in that way I would become increasingly glorified: I would gain more *pratiṣṭhā*."

Presently I wrote in a letter to my Guru Mahārāj: "This Mahārāj has created a good, favourable atmosphere here. If he is ordered to construct a centre of our own, perhaps he can do. I think Benares is an important place, a meeting place of all different religious sections, so I feel we should have our own centre here. I pray that you may encourage this *sannyāsī* to arrange for it to happen." We were at that time in a hired house and the Deities were also established there.

The reply did not come directly to me, but the general-secretary wrote to me, "We already know that his preaching is very successful. You try to listen to his analytical explanation of *Bhāgavatam* and enrich yourself by that." No mention was made about the point I had made. After some time our Śrīla Prabhupād went to Benares for some other purpose, and perhaps when I was alone he suddenly said to me, "What will be the effect of *karma-kāṇḍa*? *Karma-kāṇḍa* is to use our energy for our own satisfaction, and not meant for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. What is the necessity of connecting something

according to our whim? Only we shall do what Kṛṣṇa will desire, and that will be service." He gave an example: "Suppose a Vaiṣṇava or the Lord, has instructed, 'Bring me some flowers,' and I collect the flowers but as I am about to give them to him he says, 'No, no. I don't want flowers, bring me water.' If even at that time I press him, 'Oh, already you have ordered me to bring flowers, please accept these,' it will be *karmma-kāṇḍa*. It will be thrusting my will upon him, it will not be service." Because he is independent he may order something—and again he may cancel that same order. He is in such a position that he is not bound by his own previous expression, he is independent of that. The will is everything and he can express his will and he can withdraw his will. His position is such. Independent. His independence is of such quality and characteristic. Similarly, the highly powerful *brāhmaṇas* can give a curse such as one that will cause full forgetfulness—and they can withdraw it too.

Karṇa went to Parasurāma disguised as a *brāhmaṇa*. Then Parasurāma taught him everything about weapons. One day Parasurāma went to sleep putting his head on the thigh of Karṇa. Indra, in the form of a worm, then pierced through the thigh of Karṇa and bit into the head of Parasurāma. Parasurāma started, "What is this?" Blood flowed and smeared over his body. Parasurāma then confronted Karṇa, "You are not a *brāhmaṇa*! A *brāhmaṇa* cannot tolerate like this, therefore you must be a *kṣatriya*. Why have you come to me? You have taken all this education about weapons from me by falsehood, therefore I throw a curse that at the time of your greatest need you will forget everything." He thereby withdrew all the learning he had given. Free-will is of such nature that it may sometimes give a commitment, but if necessary it may withdraw from all commitment.

There are so many political heads of a nation who sometimes give commitments and try to oblige. They try to oblige but, if necessary for the good, they may retract that and guide by ordinance. Similarly the Scriptures are something like that. The *śāstras* are written by the *Mahātmās* who give instructions through the medium of so many symbols in the form of letters of the alphabet. That has

some value, but that value is not to the same degree as we find in the writer: it is something less. Similarly if the will, the centre from which the vibration is passing, is still in connection—i.e. if consent is there—it will work. Our Guru Mahārāj gave *Harinām* initiation to a man in Dhaka who was due to pass away within a few days. He spoke the Mantra over the phone, his consent was there so it was effective. And when instruction is given as in a book, or recorded on a tape recorder and broadcast in many ways, it has its value, but the power-house is above all.

**mayā tatam idaṁ sarvvaṁ, jagad avyakta-mūrttinā
mat-sthāni sarvva-bhūtāni, na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 9.4)

"Everything is in Me, and I am nowhere: nothing is in Me." *Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. He can withdraw, and also He can pervade through everything. It is His will. Many people may read the *śāstra*, but if there is any curse upon someone he will not receive any benefit by such reading, or even from the Original Person or by any faithful connection with Him. He will be barred.

Durvāsā cursed Śakuntalā: "You are neglecting me by engaging in deep meditation upon your husband. I am a respectable guest but you ignore me. I therefore curse you that if you are introduced to your husband he won't be able to remember a single thing about you."

Then three friends of Śakuntalā came and petitioned, "Oh, *Ṛṣi*, be propitiated by us, please withdraw your curse." As a result, he modified it so that if any reminding token be shown to the husband he will be able to remember her.

The will, the intention, is the important part. What is coming must not be cut off from the source, the power-house. Not only the power-house keeper through whom it came, but also the faithful group, the associated clan, they can have some such power to stop as well as to open. It is not that if I have the tape recording I have received everything from him: that I have full possession of his property. It cannot be done like that. Still mainly it is conducted in such a manner through the Scriptures: the various sages have written so many *śāstras* for

us to read. However, our attention must be qualified to read such Scriptures. Mere reading is intellectualism and that won't do. We are to read in a proper way—*praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā* (with humility to the Guru who knows the truth, relevant inquiry to him and service to him), and *jāho bhāgavat pada vaiṣṇaver sthāne*. Through His agent, if we properly read, then it will be beneficial, otherwise due to our deceptive nature we shall try to caste our own opinion in the name of the *śāstra* as Śaṅkarāchāryya did. He interpreted the *Vedas* but he did not try to draw the real meaning of the *Vedas*. He caste his own opinion into the *Vedas* and gave that to us.

Mahāprabhu said of him, “Śaṅkarāchāryya has not accepted the teaching of the *Vedas* as it is. He modified the teachings of the *Vedas* by his own intellectual experience, therefore in his writings is not found their real purpose.” This was the charge against Śaṅkarāchāryya by Mahāprabhu.

Rūpa Goswāmī and Sanātan Goswāmī did not only write what Mahāprabhu taught directly to them, but, by the blessings of Mahāprabhu they were able to express more. He told them, “I am inspiring you. I am giving some good-will to you that will help you to face all possible difficulties when the necessity comes for you to refute the opposing elements. It will work at that time, my good-will will be with you. It will come to your relief at the very time you are in need.” That was expressed by Mahāprabhu to both Rūpa and Sanātan.

Well-wishing without the help of sound is also possible. There is assertion in different planes to help the surroundings. To think good of someone has its value. If the Guru thinks good about the disciples, they may thrive thereby and achieve the real object of their search. Both parties have some part to play: one party must do the willing, and the other must have the receiving quality and attitude, then it will be transmitted from one place to another. If the door is closed on one side there will be no effect. If there are the qualities of a Guru in one and the qualities of a disciple in another, when they both come together the transaction begins.

Electricity cannot pass through anything and everything. Some things are non-conducting. The sincere receiving attitude from the

disciple is a necessary part otherwise no effect can be shown. If seeds are cast on stony ground no crops will grow. When current passes through a medium that cannot cent-per-cent transmit, it becomes modified. In this way modification comes from Guru to disciple: some colour is added and that is passed on and again added to, generation after generation.

Many disciples may hear from one Guru, but according to the variegatedness in their capacity of reception when they in turn will give delivery there will be some sort of difference. At first the teaching was one, but now there is a jungle. Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* says.

**imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ, proktavān ahaṁ avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha, manur ikṣvākave 'bravit
evaṁ paramparā-prāptam, imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kālēnēha mahatā, yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa
sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya, yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanah**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1-3)

"I first gave this instruction of *karma-yoga* to Vivasvān, then from him to Manu who gave it to his son Ikṣvāku. Coming down in this way it has gradually vanished. Now again I am saying that same old thing to you." The spiritual truth becomes coloured by our prejudices. It becomes contaminated and modified by mundane thought.

On the banks of the Ganges there may be neem trees, tamarind trees, mango trees, etc. They all draw the same Ganges water for nourishment but the produce of one is bitter, another is acidic, and another gives sweet fruits. They all are nourished from the same source but according to their nature their produce vary.

Both Indra and Virochan are students of the Brahman conception of "*so 'ham*." Indra thought "*so*" means the *ātmā*, and Virochan thought like a demon that "*so*" means this body. "*So 'ham*"—"I am that." But who is "that"? Within the same class some thought it to refer to the soul, but some thought it referred to the body, thus they evolved their varying conceptions according to their local prejudices.

Chapter Eight

A Wonderful Touch

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

It cannot be denied that a kind of energy is necessary to maintain one's present position. Some sort of energy is necessary for that, but then we are to give some extra push forwards in order to go ahead, and that is all-important. A seeker after the truth will search after newer and newer planes, and that will be considered as living and accommodating. We are to become more and more accommodating, earnest and eager.

sva-dharmme nidhanam śreyah, para-dharmmo bhayāvahah
(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 3.35)

The advice is given: "Try to maintain your position even at the cost of your life," then at the next point, "Go ahead. March on." Why was it first advised to maintain your present position? So that you may not fall back, but that does not mean you are not to make progress in the front. *Sva-dharmme nidhanam śreyah*—"Even at the cost of your life try to firmly maintain your position," does not mean you are not to go ahead.

sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

"Give up all considerations and take the risk of marching onwards." Only to help this, was the first advice given. First, "At any cost you must maintain your position," and then, "March onwards!" These are relative and absolute considerations. A living spiritual conception must be of that type.

The dire necessity is that in the background we address the question of how to maintain—and improve—our present position.

Devotee: In the spiritual world does everyone hold the position of a Guru for those who enter?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Of course, and whatever little help we will receive from anyone, we must be grateful to him. A person with good temperament must be thankful to all. Receiving even slight help he will feel, "Yes, I am very thankful for your guidance."

We are to learn the theory and science of gratitude. "I am grateful to you and to everyone in the environment," the very domain is of that character. Everyone thinks himself to be a thief, "I am a trespasser. Only by the grace of the environment can I have a position here. They are all well-wishers except for myself," this should be the temperament. He will be busy and sometimes forgetful of himself in the intensity of his service.

vaikuṇṭhara prthivy ādi sakala cinmaya.

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, Ādi 5.53)

We are to think, "The environment of that land in which I aspire to live is made of better stuff than I am." We are to enter into a super-subjective domain. The attitude of all the newly recruited persons there should be: "I am not of subjective character, I am of marginal potency, *taṭastha*, but I am receiving permission to enter the super-subjective area where everything holds a higher position than myself." Everyone there is of that consciousness. "The air, the earth, the trees, etc. all hold a higher position than myself, but still I have been given permission by the supreme authority to wander here. Only, I have been given some service, and I am eager to render that service to this land." With this attitude in the background, one should live there, and in the foreground one will become accustomed to discharging his particular duty. "I have come and I am treading on a soil whose intrinsic value is really superior."

A child reveres his mother but he may be taken on her lap, such is the example of our situation when we enter Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka. "The whole atmosphere is higher than myself and is to be revered, but still they have embraced me and taken me in their lap—*svarūpa*—*śakti*—and I have been asked to do some duty there: The whole

environment is to be revered, and I am allowed to live there only as a matter of grace, not as a matter of right." We are *taṭastha*, and as a matter of right we may be cast in Brahmaloṅka, the marginal potency, so we must become conscious of this fact. Before enlisting our name in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness school we must have this primary knowledge. "We are having the chance to enter where? In a revered land, God's throne. Only for a particular service am I entering the temple which holds a superior position. Wholly for service am I entering, and by their gracious nature they are drawing me there. I am being taken on my mother's lap. I take her feet-dust upon my head, but she is taking me, including my feet, upon her lap."

Devotee: With such bright prospect, why do we sometimes find devotees leaving the Gauḍīya missions?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: It will happen only if there is something wanting in us, so we must try to keep up the high level we had during our Guru Mahārāj's day. It is recorded that the highest test comes when a *jīva* is passing out from the clutches of *māyā*, illusion. At that time the personification of *māyā*, Māyādevī, comes with folded hands to pray, "Why do you leave me? Allow me to serve you. I am at your disposal and I am ready to serve you in any way. Don't leave me."

She was so cruel to punish them when they were within her clutches, but when they are leaving she approaches very modestly, "Why are you leaving me? I want to render service. Please be with me."

Pāśabaddha bhavet jīva, pāśamukta sadāśīva—what was once her prey has now become her master. So the friendly request also exists. If we have real attraction for the higher life, we are to pass that charming aspect which will try its best with sweet proposals and offerings to keep us within its jurisdiction. Such is the nature and we must be aware of it. So, not only "God, save us from our enemies," but also, "God save us from our friends"!

**sadṛśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ, prakṛter jñānavān api
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 3.33)

Nature is indomitable, so it is quite natural that one may fall prey to his own previous nature, but how can we be saved from the results

of our past activities—our acquired previous tendencies? The key is here:

indriyasyendriyasyārthe, rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau (*Bg. 3.34*)

Each sense has its corresponding external attractive objects. If you can stop the tendencies just as they are beginning, you can be successful. But if you allow them to progress, you will be undone. Only at the starting point can they be checked. If you allow them to contact with the enemy party you are lost.

prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati (*Bg. 3.33*)

However wise you may be, you will be helpless because *māyā* has such great power. Only if you can catch the tendencies as they sprout will it be well and good, otherwise at the next moment they will go beyond your control. That is the suggestion given by the Lord Himself, "Don't allow yourself in any way to have negotiation with the other party. Try to nip it in the bud. If it is allowed to grow a little, it will be beyond your control." This advice is general to all material nature. So, every event is to be tackled in proper time.

Another broad point is:

**indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ
evāṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā samstabhyātmānam ātmanā
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam**
(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 3.42-43*)

A royal road giving a very broad and comprehensive control of all evil propensities is recommended here. How to get that relief? First you are to consider the importance of your senses compared with matter; then, the importance of the mind over the senses. Then you are to consider, concentrate and understand the efficacy, fineness and importance of the faculty of judgement within you. Surpassing that, you are required to go higher and search for the cause from which the intelligence comes—its source. If for a second you can have a touch of that substance you will find a wonderful layer that is extraordinary in every point compared with that of the plane in which you are now living. It is so charming and so attractive that it will help you to bid good-bye

once and for all to this material charm. If even for a second you can have a touch of that higher substance, the material pleasure will turn into trash. Everything there is wonderful—all dealings and experience.

āścaryavat paśyati kaścīd enam
 āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ
 āścaryavac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti
 śrutvāpy enam veda na caiva kaścit

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 2.29)

The unintelligible, charming conception of that high plane will give some particular divine type of prospect that will at once turn all your material prospects into trash. Even if you come back, it still won't have any real influence upon you. Such is the realisation of the *ātmā*, what to speak of *Paramātmā*: that is more and more laudable and desirable.

Evam buddheḥ param is the *ātmā*. In the beginning, with the help of your reason concentrate even for a second there. Your inquisitive ego may even for a second meet with your real self—*jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho, kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam*—then all the charm for material pleasure, both gross and subtle, will bid you adieu for ever.

Simplicity is the first qualification. If you are really simple, or sincere, then automatically you cannot but come under the divine feet of Mahāprabhu, Śrī Chaitanyadev. It is so plain and so un-artificial. Love is a plain truth that should attract everyone. Even more than general love, Divine Love will attract all normal persons, it cannot but be. It is only necessary to be simple and unprejudiced. The antithesis is the only thing drawing us back from God, otherwise it will be found to be the plane of universal love. And 'universe' does not mean to a particular part of the universe, but the whole. Love is coming from the Absolute.

"Is there such a fool in the midst of mortality in this world who will not worship He who even the immortal worship? It is a great wonder that there can be such a person who will avoid such worship just to undergo all the mortal sufferings."

Chapter Nine

Faith and Harmony

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Here in the mundane plane, eliminating God, everyone is self-centred therefore there is clash and reaction. But in the higher realm, with harmony, there is no clash. In that plane any apparent clash exists to promote inner wealth.

In this mundane plane there is apparent friendship but inner animosity, but in the God-centred plane there is apparent competition but inner friendship because the flow of God-service is common to everyone.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the most accommodating. We are to consider that it is beyond justice. It is the land of mercy consideration. Our highest goal is from the consideration of mercy, not justice. It is inconceivable, but above justice is the plane of mercy and affection, and that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It even goes over what is our due, therefore it is high. The consideration there is crossing our capacity, so there is no room for any complaint. Everything is coming through affection and it is not based upon any justice according to our capacity, so we have no right to make any judgement. If any position will be given to us there, it will be by extended affection. On the whole, to enter into the plane of divinity means grace. We have no rights, and He may not even allow us to enter there. Only we must have as our visa the good-will to serve that land, and not to engage in treachery, otherwise we will not be allowed entrance. Faithful contribution to that land is *śraddhā*, with that we may be taken in—not only taken in but we shall find all home-comfort there and full freedom. The fullest freedom is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is above justice. The law of the country is ignored, and more benefit is allowed. We will get more freedom, comfort, and everything there in Vṛndāvan. Why?

Because it is a transaction of natural faith and love, affection, etc. It is inconceivable,

acintyaḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet

The *Upaniṣads* say, "Don't venture to test that plane with your reason. It is beyond the capacity of your thinking, it has different laws, so don't try to approach there with your calculations."

So, when we apparently see a clash between persons who are trying for realisation, we must understand it properly. We may feel discouraged: "They are approaching towards harmony, so why should they come in clash?" But we find it happens, and it may be of different types according to the plane in which the clash takes place. In *Vaikuṇṭha* we find that the four Kumāras were going to visit Nārāyaṇa, but Jaya and Vijaya appealed to them not to go at that time. The four Kumāras were infuriated and threw a curse upon Jaya and Vijaya. We sometimes find this apparently undesirable clash between the devotees, though ultimately it is all for some higher purpose for the Lord's satisfaction.

Clashes can even be seen in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Of course, in *Vṛndāvan* competition is of the highest type and we are to understand that it is necessary. It is planned by *Yogamāyā* to enhance the satisfaction of *Kṛṣṇa*. Different plans are designed by *Yogamāyā*, and the apparent clash is designed purposely in order to produce a peculiar satisfaction in *Kṛṣṇa*. Such things are found even within the various groups including that of *Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī*. In *Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvan* pastimes we even find so many *asuras* set against His *līlā*, but those demons have a contribution—in a negative way—in that a hero must have some incidents to show his heroism. To kill *asuras* is a part of heroism.

We even find clashes within the same group—groups within a group—but what is found we shall try to take as part of *līlā*. The criterion of *līlā* is that it happens for the satisfaction of the Centre.

We also find clashes, even severely, within the *līlā* of the most magnanimous incarnation of the Lord, *Śrīman Mahāprabhu*. *Adwaita Prabhu* and *Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit* presented themselves as members of the aristocratic class, but *Nityānanda Prabhu* and *Haridās Ṭhākura* represented just the opposite: the common mass. It is recorded in *Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat* that one day soon after the miscreants *Jagāi* and *Mādhāi*

had been converted and included in the *samkīrtan*, Adwaita Āchāryya revolted: "You are taking in the ordinary people of the lower section. This makes it difficult for persons of dignified position like myself and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit to remain here in this clan of *samkīrtan*." When Mahāprabhu heard this it pierced him in the core of His heart. He could not tolerate such a statement. He immediately left the party, ran straight to the Ganges and hurled Himself in the waters. Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridās Thākur quickly followed the Lord and they also jumped in. Nityānanda took the Lord by His shoulders and Haridās by His feet and they pulled Him out from the waters of the Ganges.

Mahāprabhu said, "All right, but I shall go and stay with Nandan Āchāryya." Nandan Āchāryya was a devotee whose home was on the banks of the Ganges a short way from the town of Nabadwip. Mahāprabhu hid Himself there and instructed, "Don't disclose to Adwaita Āchāryya that I am here."

Then Adwaita Āchāryya Prabhu thought to himself, "What have I done? I could not control myself. My aristocratic sentiment came out so suddenly and it hurt and struck the sentiment of Mahāprabhu so much so that He fled and jumped into the Ganges." Adwaita Āchāryya then fasted. He mourned, "What have I done?"

After two days, news of Adwaita Āchāryya's resolve to fast till death reached Mahāprabhu. Then Mahāprabhu's heart melted again and He approached Adwaita Āchāryya. "Āchāryya, get up, I am leaving my hide-out and I am coming to you." Quoting a verse He explained that by the order of a minister representing the King so many persons are hanged, but that same representative of the King who has hanged so many by the King's order, he also may be hanged by the order of the King. "The Absolute is such, please don't mind. Now get up and take *Prasādam*."

In this way Adwaita Āchāryya was pacified. Furthermore we hear that sometimes Mahāprabhu showed him honour due to his age. Adwaita Āchāryya was very senior in age, he may even have been more senior than Mahāprabhu's father, however he always considered that Mahāprabhu was not a man, therefore he constantly tried to show respect to Him. But Mahāprabhu did not allow, "What! You are

senior. You are in the rank of My guardians, the rank of My parents. You should not show honour to Me, rather I am to show *you* honour." He began forcibly taking the feet-dust of Adwaita Āchāryya who became distressed.

Then Adwaita Prabhu thought, "I have to make a plan so I can receive His punishment." So he went to his Śāntipur house and began to preach *jñāna-mārga* showing that *mukti* is the highest end, and *bhakti* is lower. "The principle of *bhakti* admits that God is fully independent, 'We may try to please Him, but He may or may not be pleased, it is His will.' So what is the necessity of wild-goose-chasing? God may or may not be propitiated and we may or may not get His Grace, it is all uncertain. But *mukti* is in our hand: by certain practices we can enter into *samādhi*, therefore *mukti* is our real end and friend. We should take to that." In this way Adwaita Āchāryya began to preach in the Śāntipur camp.

The news reached Mahāprabhu: "Adwaita Āchāryya used to preach for Your camp but now he preaches against Your principle." Then one day Nityānanda Prabhu and Mahāprabhu went to Śāntipur, and what a scene! Mahāprabhu began to give a good beating to the old Āchāryya, "Why have you invited Me and brought Me down here? By your invitation and attraction I have come down but now you are going against Me. What is your reason?" Mahāprabhu began to slap him.

Haridās Ṭhākur shuddered, "What is this? I am seeing inconceivable things." Nityānanda Prabhu stood there and found Himself to be relishing something, and wondering what more things would come out. Sītā Ṭhākurāṇī, Adwaita's wife, protested, "No, no. Don't beat that old man so hard. He will be finished! Stop your beating."

But Adwaita Āchāryya came through smiling: "Now I have taken revenge on You. You always come to take my feet-dust. But now see! You have come to punish me, so who is superior, myself or You?" In this way the Āchāryya came out smiling and everything was pacified, rather Mahāprabhu was a little indisposed. Sometimes we see such things also within the devotee section. Such things are there!

In Dvārakā also we find clashes. We find in Dvārakā that there was much dispute about a gem. The father of Satyabhāmā, Satrājī,

gained that gem by worshipping the sun-god. It was known as the Syamantaka Jewel, but it was presently taken away by one after another.

Prasena, the younger brother of Satrājīṭ, took that Syamantaka Jewel. He wore it around his neck and went into the forest in order to hunt. While in the forest a lion became charmed with the grace of the gem, he killed Prasena and took it. Then the bear Jāmbavān, Rāmachandra's servant, fought with the lion, killed him and took away the gem.

Anyhow a rumour began that Kṛṣṇa had somehow captured the gem, and that it was all His diplomacy. Because of this, Kṛṣṇa thought, "The burden is now on Me, so I shall have to search for that gem, take it and give it to its proper place. A bad name has come upon Me, so to clear My name I am to search for the gem." He therefore searched along the way that Prasena went. He then followed the footprints of the lion and found a place where a bear and the lion had been fighting. The lion lay dead.

Following the footprints of the bear Kṛṣṇa reached a hole in the earth. He entered there, and that is a story in itself. Anyhow, when Rāmachandra's servant, Jāmbavān, finally understood the situation after fighting for 15 days or so, he came out and offered the gem—and his daughter, Jāmbavatī—to Kṛṣṇa.

Then again the gem was lost. The suspect was Śatadhanvā. It was suspected that by some means Śatadhanvā had captured it, although it was not the case. On hearing the rumour Śatadhanvā became afraid, "They think I have the gem, so I will be killed."

Though he had not taken the gem, the rumour was so much against him that he became frightened and ran away from that place. Because he was running away, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma followed him. Kṛṣṇa ran fastest, captured Śatadhanvā and killed him. Searching him He found no gem and so became puzzled. By this time Balarāma had caught up with Him and Kṛṣṇa told him, "I have killed Śatadhanvā in vain. No gem is found here."

Balarāma then exclaimed, "Oh, You are deceiving me. You have become so unfaithful. All right, You go back, I am going to Jarāsandha, the enemy camp." There he began to train Duryodhan. Such *līlās* do take place and are to be traced in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

When explaining all these things, our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used to say, "These hindrances come on the path in order to make it more valuable and in order to deceive those of less faith and the unfaithful. Those who are fortunate souls will be able to cross over all these incidents and will be hopelessly attracted by the sweetness of the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa. They will be given entrance there."

Purposely these hindrances are posted along the way so that ordinary people may not enter. *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* will come to those who have deep faith and who have some real taste for the thing. In spite of all these hindrances it will come to those for whom this is unavoidably charming, and who, by descending grace, are helplessly drawn beyond such apparent hindrances. The technical name for this *līlā* is *asura-mohan*. This has been planned in order to deceive the *asura* types: those of undivine character.

So, we are to be careful about all these things. There can be quarrels amongst the parties up to the very highest. With such a beautiful flower, so soft and good-looking as a rose, why should there be any thorns? Its roots draw nourishment from the earth, and that sap produces such a soft flower, such a beautiful thing. Why should that sap also produce so many thorns on the stem? So, there is thesis, antithesis and synthesis. There is assertion of a subject, then comes opposition, then higher harmony comes in synthesis where there is found higher grouping, higher unity and harmony. Then again that becomes the thesis and so antithesis comes and again both become harmonised. This is the nature of *līlā*, and such nature is there to help.

Sometimes we may find that in order for a drama not to become monotonous some light-heartedness may be introduced to make the audience laugh. Just as a clown may be introduced in the midst of a drama to prevent any monotony, the *asura-mohan-līlā* may be necessary to give variety to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. We have to properly adjust many things when considering Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*.

I was astonished to find in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that when Kṛṣṇa was about to enter Dvārakā after a long absence, a procession party from the town came to receive Him. It is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that included in the procession were prostitutes dancing. I thought,

“What is this? In Dvārakā there are prostitutes?” I was shocked, rather, to find this. “How can Dvārakā accommodate prostitutes?”

In heaven there are also prostitutes, but we are to analyse what is at the basis of all this. Both good and bad exist, but badness is only found in the mundane realm. What is here must have its origin in the higher realm—and this is only a perverted reflection of that. Everything that is found here is also there first. From there its reflection has come here as the perverted manifestation. The main difference is that everything in that spiritual realm is full of serving attitude, but here it is all with enjoying attitude.

We cannot drag everything within our reason and arguments, but still we are to try to understand things according to our capacity, faith and realisation. Despite all this, sweetness is sweet and truth is truth. Truth, however strong it is, is truth. We are to accommodate this in our mind. We should not think that only this mundane purity is the basis to prove transcendental divinity: we are not to take the standard from here and apply it there. We are to understand service to be so pure.

Draupadī had five husbands, but if we take her name then we will be purified:

**ahalyā-draupadī-kuntī-tārā-mandodarī yathā
pañcakanyā smaret nityam mahāpātaka nāśanam**

All these five ladies had more than one husband, but they were gained by circumstance. The scholars may make you feel cautious, but don't think in that way: if you take their name *you* will be purified—such is their position. It is not for lust. It is not for mean lust that they gained so many husbands, but at the bottom of it all is sacrifice. You are to remember that. You are to study the depth before giving evaluation. You are to understand and follow the basis, the very foundation. Sacrifice can make anything pure. You are to understand the very fundamental things of existence. The degree of purity or impurity does not depend on form, but substance. We are to draw our attention towards that. We are to try to understand the substance, and not so much the form.

Chapter Ten

Focussed to Guru

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Nārada Muni gives the following advice as a general recommendation as to how to get free from unwanted desires, *kāma*:

**asaṅkalpāj jayet kāmam, krodham kāma-vivarjanāt
arthānarthekṣayā lobham, bhayaṁ tattvāvarṣanāt**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.22)

We are not to allow ourselves to contact or enter any plan of life. We are to be always open to deal with the present, not with any plan for the future. If we do not have any *kāma*, any plan, then anger may not come.

When there is some obstruction in fulfilling a plan we become angry in life, but if there is no plan of life then we are always open to serve the present and in that way we are clear—free from debt and obligation. Whatever comes in the present we do as our duty. But when there is a plan we become angry if any disturbance will come in carrying that out.

Arthānarthekṣayā lobham—and *lobha*, greed, can be conquered just by seeing the reactions of money. If we collect energy from outside, that money comes with the sin and mentality of the man from whom we collected it. It is contaminated with their particular mentality. If we have this conception we may not have greed for any energy that comes under our command.

Bhayaṁ tattvāvarṣanāt—we apprehend so many good and bad things—we fear. In order to conquer fear we are to cultivate understanding of the real nature of this plane: it all runs by the Lord's will

but we are throwing in our separate interest which comes back to us as reaction. We are to accept that our individual opinion may not be successful here. Everything that comes in clash with the Absolute Will shall have to vanish. With this idea we will be open in the present and free from any future plans.

All these advices are expressed, but in the end it is given:

etat sarvvaṁ gurau bhaktyā, puruṣo hy añjasā jayet

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.25)

“There is only one thing by which we can conquer all these abnormalities. What is that? *Guru-bhakti*. ‘I am a servant of my Guru. Whatever he shall say, I shall do.’ Concentrate on this point.”

We are to withdraw all plans and put everything just in this one point: “Whatever will come through the Guru, the representation of the Lord, I shall do that.” There is no necessity of any other thinking, planning, designing, etc.: “I want this, I shall do that,” is all unnecessary. We are only to concentrate on one point. The representation of the Supreme is there—the Guru—and what is wanted by him, we shall do that. Everything is focussed to that one point without seeing anything else.

Exclusive focus is illustrated in the example of Droṇāchāryya testing his students by asking them to aim their arrows at the eye of a toy bird placed in a tree. Each aimed in turn, and Droṇāchāryya asked, “What do you see?” The first replied, “The bird, the tree, etc.”

Dissatisfied, Droṇāchāryya said, “Stand aside.”

But when it came to the turn of Arjuna, he replied, “I can see the bird.”

“Can you see the whole of the bird?”

“No. Only the head.”

“The whole of the head?”

“No. Only the eye of the bird.”

“You cannot see anything else?”

“No. I can see only the eye of the bird.”

Only then was Droṇāchāryya satisfied.

In this way all should be concentrated to one point, “I have connection with the representation of the Supreme, the Guru, and I am at

his disposal. Whatever he shall say, I shall do. I am not a servant of anyone else."

etat sarvvaṁ gurau bhaktyā, puruṣo hy añjasā jayet
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.25)

In that way there will be no anger, no lust—nothing. If one can do such exclusive *Guru-bhakti* it will strongly keep him in a safe position, and that is the key to very easy and quick success.

yasya deve parā bhaktir, yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ, prakāśante mahātmanah
(*Śetāsvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

A person who serves Guru and Kṛṣṇa can understand the real meaning of the Scriptures, otherwise the real meaning will not be revealed and one will not be able to follow their real purpose. That is the apriori method of studying the *Vedas*.

Ācāryyavān puruṣo veda—the meaning of the *Upaniṣads* can be understood only by those who have their Guru. Not everyone can understand the real meaning of the *Upaniṣads*, but only those who are at the disposal of a real Guru can have access there. By intellectualism we cannot understand their real meaning. Only by approaching the Guru with a serving attitude will the meaning be revealed. He will come and express Himself to us, and we are to have the mood, "I am unqualified and low, but He will come and give admission irrespective of any intellect, study or anything else on my part."

Research scholarship in the illusory world is all quite a different approach. Scientific research is going from one misconception to another misconception. It is all misconception. It is error and has falsehood at the root. *Acintya-bhedābheda*. The Centre is such that everything is at *His* command: "Let there be light," and there was light. "Let there be water," and there was water.

The research scholars try to research the nature and cause of everything, but ultimately it is all *His* sweet will. Neglecting that, they simply research, research, research, but if *His* will is withdrawn, everything will be falsified.

We do not want the apparently deep knowledge of the researchers. We have no concern with what is actually this partial, infinitesimal, surface knowledge which is so attractive to those floating, giving and taking, in that section. It is all false and black-marketeering. Everyone's money is black and they are transacting with that. In this society false notes are being circulated as real currency.

Acintya-bhedābheda. Everything is His will, and it is the greatest adventure to search for Kṛṣṇa, to search for the root of the whole infinite. It needs sufficient courage and preparedness to face the risk. To go to discover the North Pole or the highest peak of the Himalayas needs so much courage and involves risk, then what to speak of the courage necessary to find out the Absolute Cause of the Whole. Internal courage—spiritual courage—is necessary. We are to have soul's courage and have the confidence of deep faith. We are to understand the noble character of the faith within us. Without electricity we cannot have connection with the moon and other planets. Our hands and eyes cannot contact there. Faith can connect us with the farthest things. All other methods fail. Faith is substantial, it is not part of an illusion of the mind. The whole mind is a concocted thing; it is a source of forgery. Faith is not to be found there. Faith is a function of the soul.

We cannot even see what is within our own body without the help of some apparatus. Through faith, *śraddhā*, the soul can approach and see the higher world.

By faith we can approach the highest, noblest thing, not by our hand or by the help of any mundane elements.

Centenary

Chapter Eleven

Unadulterated Purity

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Question: Mahārāj, what is the meaning of chastity for the proper disciple?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: Chastity is faithfulness to the cause for which we have come. It is a relative term. Chastity in the absolute sense is unchangeable adherence to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There also may be relative chastity, such as when someone sincerely pursues his interest in a particular plane. However that type of sincerity is not complete. We think sincerity is only complete when one comes to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness of Godhead. Other forms of chastity are all relative. No knowledge separate from Kṛṣṇa consciousness is chaste. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness also we may not think that by beginning, by getting the touch of Kṛṣṇa consciousness we have acquired the whole thing. When we get the pure conception of Kṛṣṇa consciousness the hazy conceptions will vanish. There are also different stages of realisation in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness and by its degree of awakening we become more and more chaste.

Chastity means our adherence to the truth. The truth that we have come to realise, that truth is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a limited thing that one can capture in his hand and swallow. It is of infinite character. There is gradation and there is room for progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We will say that one is chaste due to his own sincere progress, not due to adherence to the figure, the formal conception.

vyāso veti na veti vā

Such a strong expression is also there, *vyāso veti na veti vā*. All rights reserved. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is unlimited. Still there is the

possibility of conceiving its purity in its unadulterated form, and the *Āchāryyas* are giving that to us.

In the beginning a new student who gains admission to a college cannot expect to know anything and everything. We need to have systematic, properly adjusted knowledge.

There are many amongst our group who heard Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's advices and words, but only partly. One day a senior man and *sannyāsī*, repeated something Śrīla Prabhupāda had said. Although it related to a particular time and place, he wanted to utilise that in a universal way. I gave some objection: "Mahārāj, Śrīla Prabhupāda told this, it is true, but this is not the whole thing. He explained other things also, therefore we have to harmonise. We cannot ignore the other part of his advice."

We have to come into adjustment and systematic understanding of the words of Śrī Gurudeva. The partial aspect may sometimes lay stress on a particular point and who has attentively caught that, he may only take that and nothing beyond. But systematic knowledge of the whole must be understood. In a progressive life the plane where one devotee may want to withdraw from to make further progress, may be the goal of attainment for another devotee. The object of attainment for the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, a *madhyama-adhikārī* may withdraw from in his attempt to climb higher, as in ascending a staircase step by step.

Under the guidance of one *Guru* there are so many different sections of disciples. All the students may not be equal in their realisation. One can understand to a certain extent, another can understand something more, and another can understand even more. In this way there may be gradation. Even the senior disciples may fall back and the juniors may go up. That is also possible. We have seen and you can also see now. Many of the older ones have gone away and the newcomers are showing greater energy. You may find that amongst yourselves, as we also found amongst ourselves. There are no stereotyped rules. It is a living thing.

Kṛṣṇa is there. He says that He has not finished Himself in His own *śāstras*. "What I have given in the *śāstras*, you must do that, but

one who crosses that to come to Me is My higher servitor." So, Kṛṣṇa is living and He is above all. A transaction, a trade may be made by cash or by loan. Whether trading, or purchasing with cash, or purchasing with a loan, He is there, He is master, He is autocrat. His dealings should not be limited even by the Scriptures.

He says, "Even crossing the Scriptures I exist, even though those directions are given by Me."

**ājñājaiva guṇān doṣān,
mayādiṣṭān api dvakān
dharmman samtyajya yah
sarvvān myām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ**

So, directions are of different classes. And Kṛṣṇa says, "Sometimes it will be necessary to show devotion to Me, even crossing My own laws." We must also consider the realisations of higher devotees. So many things are there, but the main thing is faithfulness. To die for the cause. Die to live!

Simplicity means to be independent of ancient prejudices, to be empty, to be un-possessed of the mal-possession. To be clear. To be free of foreign possession, that is simplicity.

Formal and substantial. They are two different things, and here is the main difficulty in our progress. *Śreyah sva-dharmine....* Progress means to deal with these two difficulties, to stick to one's former position, and beyond that, to make progress—advance. If advancement is not sure, it is judicious to stick to the former position. If there is any doubt of progress one should stick to the former position. But that is not progress. Progress means to leave the former position and go ahead. Only one who is hopeful of his bright future, should leave his former position and go to advance. Those who are of doubtful mentality, suspicious mentality, it is better for them to stick to their former position where they already have a consolidated foundation. They should take their stand there. According to his own progress he cannot but see that some things must be rejected and some new things in front must be invited to come near. Progress means this.

In his book *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam*, Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī has given *sambandha-jñāna*, the knowledge of the relationship between

ourselves and the Lord. We have to follow that closely. That means proper adjustment. At first we shall have some sort of approximate knowledge and that will be realised more and more. Taking our stand in a particular position if we look out we will be able to say, 'this is here,' 'this is there,' 'this is lower,' 'that is higher.' In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we must understand *sambandha-jñāna*.

What I do not find to be my own I must not take risk for that. But when I find 'this is my own' even though it may be a little far, then I must jump there. This is my own and my inner hankering is only searching for that thing, and if I find that is within my reach, then I must jump there. It depends on our sincerity and our proper understanding.

There are many who cannot control the temptation from within to exploit the Guru or Kṛṣṇa—*guru-bhogī*, *kṛṣṇa-bhogī*—and create some facilities for their own personal exploitation. That is also possible. A real student, a bonafide student, must be alert on all sides whether non-Kṛṣṇa is coming in disguise. We must try to recognise that and save ourselves. If we are sincere no one can disturb us.

Vibhīṣan said: "We must be very careful about the *māyā*-tactics of the opposing party." Hanumān was keeping Rāma and Lakṣmaṇ in a room made of his tail, and Vibhīṣan warned Hanumān: "Be very careful! Mahīrāvana will come and try to deceive you in disguise." Then at last Mahīrāvana came in the garb of Vibhīṣan himself and took them away.

There is a good possibility that *māyā* will approach us. We have to be very careful to protect those valuable tendencies within us and maintain our taste and the vision of our inner awakening. We must maintain that and if possible make some progress in our line. That is our interest.

'God save me from my enemies.' And, 'God save me from my friends'—that expression is also there. You must be alert that as a friend someone may not go to deceive you. You must be so much careful. At your own risk pray to the Supreme, the *Chaittya-guru*, for giving you the right direction: "What is what? What is to be accepted?" It is a crucial point.

I don't want to take the responsibility. Mahāprabhu and Kṛṣṇa also do not take the responsibility. Even though Kṛṣṇa can control everything, He also says: "You are free."

In the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa instructs: "I have said what I had to say. Now, Arjjuna, you decide what you want to do. *Vimrśyaitad aśeṣena*. Think it over exhaustively. Think it over to the best of your ability and then decide what step you are going to accept."

Jaya Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa-parivrājakācāryya-varyya Aṣṭotara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, kī jaya!

Centenary

Chapter Twelve

Surrender, Service, Dedication

—all done through *śraddhā*

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness the quality of wholesale dedication is necessary. It is indispensable. Partial dedication will not do; in connection with Kṛṣṇa the demand is wholesale, and nothing less will do. He is an autocrat. The demand from the autocrat is categorically different. Kṛṣṇa is not satisfied with any partial service. He wants to swallow the whole thing, nothing less. He has the demand of an autocrat, but He is the absolute good, He is the beautiful, He is the harmony, and He is the love—but His demand is such.

Self-giving is the symptom of *śraddhā*, faith. Without self-giving, intellectualism will have no value. Reading Scriptures will have no value, and also the physical association of the *sādhū* will have no value if there is no *śraddhā*. Many living entities including bugs and mosquitos have physical association with the *sādhū*s, but association through dedication is necessary. *Śraddhā* is all-important. To have *śraddhā* means to have the mood that if we dedicate everything to Kṛṣṇa, we will get everything. We will achieve whatever is necessary: wholesale fulfilment. The path of that is dedication, *śraddhā*, and *sevā*, service, and therefore our Guru Mahārāj laid much emphasis on service. We were not allowed so much to read even *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the books by the Six Goswāmīs, but our time was to be utilised in service,

The serving nature will connect you with the real thing. Neither scriptural knowledge nor the close association with a saint has any meaning if it is not done with dedication, self-surrender, self-giving.

Physical association alone has no meaning. It must all be done through *śraddhā*, and service, so much so that if a *sādhū* or Guru asks, "Read this book," then it will be service; but if I read a book to enhance my knowledge, it may be *jñāna* but not service. We can only have real progress through *sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*, otherwise everything may be imitation. If we do not approach with the spirit of service, everything may be imitation, and we won't come in contact with reality. This is the most important point, and it is the speciality of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, our Ācāryyas, our Gurudevas, and also of Mahāprabhu and Rūpa Goswāmī.

Surrender, service, and dedication: this is the key to deal with the infinite—Vaiṣṇava. Without knowledge and without much energy one can attain fulfilment. It is not necessary to have the energy to be able to move a mountain. Also to read all the Scriptures in the world and put them "within our belly" will not produce any good.

A typical example was shown in the *Mahābhārata*. Kṛṣṇa foretold that when the *rajasuya yajña* of Mahārāj Yudhiṣṭhir would be finished, a particular bell there would ring automatically. In that way everyone would know that the *yajña* was completed. The sacrifice was held and everything was finished, but the bell did not ring. Bhīma asked Kṛṣṇa, "You said that the bell would ring automatically. Everything has now been finished but it is not ringing. Why not?"

Kṛṣṇa replied, "No. One thing is still remaining."

"What is that?"

"*Vaiṣṇava-sevā*, the service of a Vaiṣṇava."

Bhīma was surprised: "What do You say? So many *munis*, *ṛṣis*, Nārada, Vyāsadeva, and even You Yourself, are all satisfied with having been well-fed, yet You say that *Vaiṣṇava-sevā* has not been done?"

"Yes."

"So where is that Vaiṣṇava?"

Kṛṣṇa then indicated, "Go to the outskirts of town, and there you will find a particular Vaiṣṇava of the lowest caste. He does not go anywhere, but he is satisfied by taking the Name of the Lord and leading a full life of devotion without any care for the world."

Hearing this, the Pāṇḍavas went with a chariot to receive that man. They found him, an ordinary poor man of the lower class, and they approached him. He was perplexed: "What is this? Oh, so many important men have come to my cottage. What is the matter?" He became very much panic-stricken.

Then they petitioned him with folded palms, "We have come to bring you to take some food at the place of the *yajña*." What to do? He could not avoid their order. Draupadī had to cook, so she prepared various palatable dishes. She thought, "*Vaiṣṇava-sevā* has not been done. So many *ṛṣis*, *munis*, and even Lord Kṛṣṇa has been fed, but *Vaiṣṇava-sevā* has not been done!" So with all her skill she cooked foods of various types, and the man was fed—but the bell did not ring.

Bhīma asked, "What is the matter? He has finished eating but the bell has not rung."

Kṛṣṇa said, "There must have been some offence against *Vaiṣṇava-sevā*, and therefore the bell did not ring. What do you say?—Do any of you have any doubt or bad conception about this man?"

The Pāṇḍavas then asked one another if any of them had thought any evil about him. At last Draupadī admitted, "I had some thought in my mind that the man is low-born, and although I prepared so many curries with the utmost attention and skill, he mixed all the preparations together and then ate that. He does not know how to eat because he comes from a very low class—this is what I had in my mind."

Kṛṣṇa explained, "There is some contempt for the *Vaiṣṇava*, and therefore the bell has not rung. There is no other course than for you to go to him again, bring him, and again feed him."

So the Pāṇḍavas went and brought him back. This time all of them waited with great respect as he took *prasādam*, and the bell rang with every morsel.

This example has been shown to us. Those who are *niskincana* do not want anything—no name, no fame, or anything of the kind. They are naturally satisfied with whatever comes, and they are whole-sale dedicated to the Lord. Such devotion can be found anywhere without any show of grandeur. No worldly grandeur is necessary; just richness of the heart—no knowledge, no education, no honour

of a high birth, no power, and no gorgeousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so full, so sufficient, so absolute, that just a particle of that contains everything. All grandeur, all education, and everything is there: it is of such a nature. Service, self-dedication, *saraṇāgati*, surrender: that is the necessity, not valour or learning.

api cet sudurācāro, bhajate mām ananya-bhāk

sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ, samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30)

"You fail to understand, but he is all right. He must be thought to be a *sadhu*, a truly honest man, and nothing else. He may have no name or fame or good presentation, or any of the qualities that attract us; none of these are necessary." Self-contentment does not require anything. It can stand alone. It is self-sufficient. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is self-sufficient. It does not require any form of paraphernalia to establish itself: it is a self-established thing. With it there will be no need of hankering for anything, whether it be grandeur or anything else.

There was a *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava named Vāsudeva Vipra in Kurmma-kṣetra just south of Purī. He was a leper, but what type of leper? He had such compassion that when any worms would fall from the sores on his body, he would pick them up and place them back in the wounds to prevent their dying. One day he found within his mind, "The Lord is coming to a place nearby and I shall have a chance to have His *darśana*."

Mahāprabhu went to that district, but by the time Vāsudeva arrived there, Mahāprabhu had already left. Vāsudeva was greatly disappointed and fell to the floor, crying, "What misfortune! I could not have His *darśana*, not even a glimpse of the Lord, and He has now left. I am too unqualified to meet Him."

Mahāprabhu went almost a mile when suddenly He felt some attraction pulling Him back. He ran back, found that leper, and embraced him. The leper body vanished and turned into a beautiful figure. Such was the devotion of Vāsudeva Vipra.

The devotees feel themselves to be the poorest of the poor, the humblest of the humble—*atma doinya*. *Tṛṇād api sunīcena, taror api sahiṣṇunā*: they feel themselves to be lower than a blade of grass.

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura has written that in general, the measurement of a Vaiṣṇava is according to his degree of humility—his natural, real humility. Only a show of humility has no value. Imitation has no value anywhere. Proper humility can only come when one feels his connection with the autocratic Lord and Master. Then only can he feel himself as humble: the master is the autocrat and the servant has no position. This is a matter of realisation and not a 'mathematical' truth. In connection with the autocrat he has no position, and if he accepts this naturally, not artificially, he will automatically be the humblest. The servant of an autocrat has no position and no ego whatsoever, and therefore he will possess natural humility—and that is his wealth. What sort of wealth is that? It is such that it can capture the autocrat. Service is of that type. A real servant has such a position in relation to the master, and vice versa: the master is also addicted to his servant. One party is surrendering, and the master is also naturally attracted to that sincere servant.

The Lord is an autocrat, but He is not heartless. So the devotee who is the richest is the lowest. The meanest, the poorest, is the richest. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Service is necessary, nothing else. We must find out how to develop that innate tendency so our body may be made of that stuff and nothing else. How is this possible? *Sraddhā* will make us understand. Sincerely hankering we will feel, "Yes. This is the highest; we want that." Sincere hankering, faith, and greed for that are necessary—*laulyam arta mulyam ekalam*. If you want it, you can have it. Such is that plane. It is a plane of natural transactions, but we do not want it; therefore we are culprits. Sincere wanting from the core of the heart is the only necessity—nothing else. Without that we must think ourselves to be sham devotees, only showing their attire. But if real inner hankering exists, it will be wholesale genuine. Wholly want, and you can have. *Laulyam arta mulyam ekalam*—but there must not be any adulteration in that wanting. It must be sincere—*laulyam*. If you want, you can have. It is a most simple thing. It is most natural and most gentleman-like: "If you want, you can have. No complaint can come against you from any quarter. But if you do not want, then don't have." *Laulyam arta mulyam ekalam*. The only price

is to really want it. Don't misuse it. Understand the value of it, want it, and you will have it.

Śraddhā is the real regard to have. This is the crux, and this is *the* highest aim, and only this can satisfy our inner thirst. The innermost thirst can be quenched only by this. By giving your small self you can gain the whole infinite.

So what is needed from us? Sincere hankering.

How to develop that? With the contact of the *sadhu* and with the help of the Scriptures we can try to increase that inner feeling.

That inner demand can only be satisfied by Kṛṣṇa-consciousness. It will satisfy our innermost demand. This is the justification of the saying *sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja* (Bg. 18.66). "Give up all conceptions and phases of duty. Whatever call of duty comes to you, give it up." This is such a high theory. "I am everything to you. *Sarvva-dharmmān*—all conceptions of duty are to be given up, and—*mām ekaṁ*—only Myself exists as your single concern: this is the position of Myself and yourself by nature and constitution. Try to understand and do that, and you will find that everything undesirable, sinful, and reactionary will vanish—*ahaṁ tvām sarvva-pāpebhyo. Mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*—no necessity for repentance will come to you. Only you will get full satisfaction." This is the greatest assurance that has ever been found so clearly and boldly expressed. "Give up all phases of duty and come to Me alone, and you won't have to repent for any loss." This call is clear, bold, straight, and direct, and it is the conclusion of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* where so many phases of duty have been dealt with that almost all have been covered.

Mahāprabhu said,

yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Madhya 7.128*)

"If you want to do anything good to the world, talk about Kṛṣṇa. Try to distribute Him—He who can compensate for all other alternatives. Only try to distribute that central, absolute thing to help the people and

the environment, and don't have any other sort of duty. Only try to distribute this teaching of *sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* to whomever you meet. If you want to do good to others, only give this highest thing. Engage yourself in this way and you will become more and more confirmed in your position, and so many others will be benefitted. No other more holy duty than this can be there."

Especially in this Age of Kali we are to engage in this Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan: talk about Kṛṣṇa, distribute Him. Everyone is hard-hearted or heartless, so go out and distribute heart to everyone. Distribute everywhere the heart of the heart; the real sweet heart—distribute it to everyone. This is the most holy campaign and engagement, so what more can we invest?

Mahāprabhu said, *yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*: "Understand that I order you to do this, therefore the dirt of any ego that you have become a Guru and are distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness will not touch you. Keeping on your head that this is My order, go on with this distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no other subject of discussion. Whoever you meet, talk to them only about Kṛṣṇa; talk about their heart of hearts."

Everywhere the key is in the spirit of surrender, service, and dedication—*sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*.

Centenary Year



Chapter Thirteen

The Harmonizing Spirit

From "*Absolute Harmony*" transcribed and published by
Prabhu Madhura Kṛṣṇa as an illustrated limited edition (Australia 1991)

Disciple: The more intense dedication becomes, the more disappointed I become. How is this possible?

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj (Śrīla Guru Mahārāj): You will find in Hegel's philosophy, "Die to Live." So you must not be a miser. You are to fully die as you are at present. You are to put your false self into the fire and allow the alloy to be eliminated. The pure gold will then manifest with its dazzling colour. Of course the soul does not die, but those alloyed things—the mind, body and so many other false aspirations—will be reduced to ashes by the fire of dedication. So die in order to live in the real world.

Disciple: If everyone had that spirit, Mahārāj, there would be no breakups and factions as are found in so many religions and sects.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: But everyone is not normal. There are differences. And those engaged in the abnormal cannot follow the perfect course. Everyone has some imperfection and defect.

The Lord's *līlā* are for His satisfaction, but even there we find some differences in the group of the perfect servants although they are in their normal position in His domain, Vṛndāvan. So competition and fighting to satisfy the Lord's sweet will is acceptable.

Nothing can be bad in His domain. If fighting is satisfaction for the Lord then we can do that. We should not be disappointed to find differences, but we should try to find the common interest.

Disciple: But if we neglect Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's Mission of giving *Prema-bhakti* to the fallen souls, and instead fight only for

our own selfishness and prestige, I think there is something wrong with that.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: A course of treatment is given to a hospital patient but as one disease is located and treated, another disease may emerge. As that second disease is treated another disease may come out, and then another.

Sin is in the aspirants, not in those who are perfect. Those who come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness are all patients. This is not a place of normal healthy persons, but it is a place for patients who are being purified through a course of treatment. And that process is called *sāddhana-bhakti*.

Disciple: So where are the doctors, Mahārāj?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: There may not be expert doctors but there are so many students in the process of learning and they are practising accordingly. You cannot expect absolute knowledge everywhere. Research into nuclear fusion, whether in Russia or America, is always progressive as it is always in a middle stage, a relative position; furthermore it can be expected they may never find the full extent of nuclear science. But because progress is always in a relative position it does not mean the Absolute does not exist, also it does not mean that the campaign should be given up. No! Everything may be defective but still we are to continue.

Although all is not perfect, still we are to progress with our daily food and activities as we have to maintain ourselves and aspire for the maximum good. We have to make the best of a bad bargain with whatever is available to us. The absolute position is not easily attained. Everyone of us has to pass through relative positions towards the Absolute. There is elimination and acceptance everywhere—this is the meaning of progress, and we cannot avoid it. But elimination should not be done inconsiderately. At the same time our object will always be the higher aim.

sarvva-dharmmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
 ahaṁ tvām sarvva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ
 (Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 18.66)

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair."

In every subject there is progress and we are not to blame others for whatever comes to us; rather the whole burden of this trouble is ours. No one else is to be blamed. Everywhere there is the hand of the Absolute. When there is a government a hooligan may be detained but if there is no order or government then criminals can run amok. There is the Absolute government and we cannot escape that law. According to our *karma* we do things to others and receive the reactions: it is controlled, it is not anarchy. So we are to suffer and enjoy the result of our own *karma*—the fruit of our own action—that is the law. When we think, "I am responsible for all my lawlessness," there will be a favourable time ahead and we shall be released. When a criminal sees that the punishment being dealt him is justified, with atonement he may be released and he may not commit any nuisance afterwards. Similarly, when we realize we are suffering from our own reactions, then we will come to the door of real salvation.

In order to illustrate that our own *karma* has created our present environment we can adapt the saying, "A bad workman quarrels with his tools," to: "A bad workman quarrels with his *stools*." We have earned such an atmosphere by our previous *karma*—our previous actions—and no one else is to be blamed. This is the advice of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and when, in fact, we come to realize this truth then our day of liberation will be near. Do you follow?

Disciple: Yes, I follow clearly.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: So now you can make no further question? Where do you find your prospect?

Disciple: I am simply disappointed with politics and the differences between religious institutions.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Previously when Einstein came and spoke out against Newton, he was insulted, but later the community recognized, "Oh, Einstein is above Newton."

So don't forget you are in the infinite. There are many different parties and they may have many different convictions according to their

capacity to understand the truth. They are of variagated nature and therefore there cannot but be variety and difference, and for some that may result in internal or external quarrel.

First the followers of Newton took their stand against Einstein, but gradually they found that what Einstein was saying was true and moreover he was giving a higher conception than Newton. It was not the third but the fourth dimension that was given by Einstein.

So the possibility of the future must be calculated within the present, otherwise any estimation is not proper. Things are always changing. The factor of change must be calculated within the present otherwise it is not complete.

In the spiritual arena Bhagavān Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu came and manifest the fifth dimension which was above and beyond all previous conceptions but still accommodating them all. Prior to that the fourth dimension—Vaikuṇṭha—was given by Rāmānuja; the third dimension was given by Śaṅkarācāryya and the second dimension was given by Buddha.

Buddha recognized the existence of the subtle body, and concluded that with the dissolution of that subtle body nothing remains. Then Śaṅkarācāryya said, "The subtle body is only a reflection of a further thing, Brahman, which is itself true and eternal; and this world is also a reflection of that. With the dissolution of that reflection, the individual soul dissolves forever and nothing but Brahman remains." There are in fact so very many differences between the propounders of the main conceptions of reality and also to a certain extent there are differences amongst their disciples.

Śaṅkarācāryya and Buddha both preferred that the ultimate goal be non-differentiated, unknown and unknowable; and they finished there. Do you wish to go there? Elimination of all diversity may be a very peaceful position—a deep slumber—and that is their goal. There are many followers of that creed, but their sacrifice is of a lesser degree than those who dedicate themselves to the higher plane.

Rāmānuja said, "But there is another world on the opposite side!" This material world is the world of exploitation, and beyond that is

liberation—*Brahma-nirvāṇa*—but on the other side of that is the positive plane which is purely subjective and is full of dedication: that is the fourth dimension, *Vaikuṇṭha*, the land of Viṣṇu.

Then Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu gave the additional conception, explaining, "Calculative dedication in *Vaikuṇṭha* is one thing, but *spontaneous* dedication to Kṛṣṇa in *Goloka* is another; and the highest ideal is not spontaneous dedication to power and majesty, but to beauty." And this has been clearly proved.

Śaṅkarācāryya said, "All is one, there is no variety." But Mahāprabhu pointed out, "If there is no variety, how can the question of unity arise?" If there is variety then there must be the question of unity. So in this world we are to make proper adjustment.

We want higher sacrifice, living dedication and tolerance for the Central Truth. That Truth we see as personal and with His own will—and we must admit that, if we want to have entrance into that world.

Dedication to Kṛṣṇa is nectar and exploitation of this material energy is poison, and what the followers of Śaṅkara and Buddha want is the middle position where everything is harmonized into death—the plane of cessation of difference. That is *Brahma-nirvāṇa*, the final peace devoid of trouble where all are buried in eternal slumber. If you prefer, then you can go there. But what you find in this world is the reflection of the original whole, perverted into exploitation. On the other side is dedication. In the group of servitors practising pure dedication, even their quarrel becomes beautiful. Whatever is found here is found there totally. Try to understand this general principle.

A poison may be utilized as medicine when applied properly. The *māyāvādīs* (impersonalists) cannot find any harmony in difference but they can only find harmony in the conception of non-differentiated *Brahman* consciousness. They cannot keep up the beautiful harmony in variety held by the Vaiṣṇavas; rather they consider that everything must be merged into one to solve the problems of the world. Other than that they have no solution but only disturbance.

With the qualifications of humility, patience, forbearance, and no tendency to seek self-glory but rather to glorify others and honour

their respectable existence, we can live happily with our neighbours and the whole environment. Mahāprabhu has given this solution to us and we are to equip ourselves in this way.

Why should you think your neighbour to be undesirable? You are not to complain against the environment but you are to control yourself and come to the proper understanding. With proper adjustment you will find everything to be harmonious: the desired land of your life. At home you shall find everything.

Do you know of Judas in the Christian teachings?

Disciple: Yes, he betrayed Jesus.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj: When Jesus was praying in the garden before his crucifixion, Judas approached him with the scribes and priests in order to betray him, by identifying that Messiah with a kiss. Suddenly Jesus cast his glance towards Judas in such an impressive way—he penetrated Judas. Judas thought to himself, “I am caught, I shall be responsible for Jesus Christ’s demise, but still Jesus’s vision to me was something like: ‘I am exploiting you Judas. It is not that you are exploiting me, rather I am utilising you as a traitor to show the greatness of my life to the future world.’ ”

Jesus had already said (at his last supper), “Amongst these twelve disciples one will betray me.” He knew. Judas was there then and Jesus had cast his glance towards Judas. Then later, when Judas came with the soldiers and scribes to the garden of Gethsemane to capture him, Jesus once again cast his glance towards Judas and was thinking, “You think you are exploiting me for some money but I am exploiting you for eternity. You have to stand out as a sinful person against me, I knew you were a traitor, but I did not disclose you. I still took you within my group of followers knowing full well that I am exploiting you.” The look of Jesus was like that.

Judas was crazed. He threw away the sack of silver. He ran to the authorities and said, “I have committed the worst sin, I cannot tolerate it!”

Judas’s energy was drunk, his spirit was drawn. Just like in jujitsu, when someone attacks the opposition with great force, if the opposi-

tion suddenly withdraws, it causes the attacking person to fall on his face—Judas found himself in that sort of position. Jesus was exchanging love for betrayal. It was the sort of love that disarmed and sent Judas mad, “I treated him so wickedly, yet his look is not one of vindictiveness but of infinite gratitude. That sort of look Jesus cast upon me.”

In perfect vision, in the full-fledged consideration, every atom is helping the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Whether it is direct or indirect—and although it seems to be indirect at present, a deeper vision will reveal that it is coming towards direct service.

Jagāi and Mādhāi came at first to physically beat Nityānanda Prabhu. Yet later they became submissive. They ended up singing the Holy Names of Nityānanda and Gaurāṅga, showing an example to the public. They showed, “We, the worst rogues, are converted into honest men by the mercy of our benevolent Lord.” They enhanced the beauty of the conduct of the Lord by sacrifice. To play the negative role, great sacrifice is required. They gave away their own fame to make the Lord glorious forever. The depth of our vision will detect these things.

We will see so much direct service even from the indirect section. *Māyā* and Satan are also rendering service to God. Without darkness, light cannot be perceived. To play the part of darkness, to show the greatness of light, sacrifice is required. Satan is illuminating God’s greatness. He is, apparently negative but Satan’s contribution makes God so magnanimous. If Satan did not exist then how could we understand the goodness and greatness of God? Everywhere there is the Grace of God.

Mahādev, Lord Śiva, sometimes repents and mourns, “Oh Lord, what can I do? You are Absolute and You have engaged me to accept the position of leader of the opposition party. I am going against You because I am giving encouragement to the demons. This most unfortunate post has been given to me by You, but since Your order is unchallengeable then what to do?! I am following Your order but my heart is not satisfied my Lord!” So, Śiva is a devotee but sometimes he gives opposition to Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. He encourages the demoniac

powers against the Lord. In an indirect way He fights against Kṛṣṇa with his followers the *bhūtas* (ghosts and demons).

Ignorance is not accidental, it is earned by our previous action—man is the architect of his own fortune. The bad weather I am meeting with at present has been earned by myself. Don't complain against the environment. Utilise it as best you can and try to see the Grace of the Absolute therein. The anomaly I am facing at this present time is the product of my own action, no one else is to blame.

Not only is that true; but from another viewpoint it can also be seen that the Grace of the Lord is always present everywhere—eager to help me—coming in the guise of an apparently unfavourable environment according to the vision of my present experience. That is the necessary medicine for my disease, the medicine to cure my madness. It is like medicine dispensed by the Lord. He is everywhere with His sympathetic hand extended to us in the circumstances of most intense danger. To have this attitude is to have the key—the solution that solves our unfavourable circumstances, our unfavourable position.

The Lord is not vindictive. He does not want to punish us. Punishment has come only to teach us. The punishment is there but coming from the affectionate hand to teach us, to improve us, to help us. We have to see all dangers like that.

So set yourself right—not others—and real peace you will find. And never try to enjoy the result of your actions. This is the key to a successful life, and happiness will flow from that. You will find the Infinite is your Friend.

Everything is a part and parcel of the Original, therefore God is manifested in everything. And it is not that we can sacrifice or negate everything and only God remains, otherwise why are we here? Our individuality and existence is real. So both sides must have some recognition. Harmony between them is truth proper. This is the conception of Mahāprabhu. There is polarity and also there is unity and harmony, and that is all-important. Dislocation is unhealthy. Proper adjustment is necessary. *Māyā* means dislocation. Provincial, local

interests are clashing with each other as well as with the Absolute. But proper adjustment comes through achieving understanding of the Absolute. Such understanding brings true harmony. All these things should be discussed and understood.

Disciple: How can we practically understand and apply the principle of harmony?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: In your conception what does harmony mean?

Disciple: I understand that, strictly speaking, harmony is a musical term referring to different musical tones which are in balance with each other.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: In a choir or an orchestra many instruments are being played or many singers are singing so the variety will be a credit to the harmony. Different types of instruments are being played but there must be harmony there, and the highest harmony depends upon how the many different instruments are being played in tune. Hundreds of different instruments are playing, preparing the music—yet they must all be attuned to the conductor. So sacrifice, dedication in its highest degree, will be of such a nature that it can accommodate and tolerate all difference. Therefore by toleration, harmony will increase. The highest type of harmony can tolerate any type of opposition. It is all-accommodating. In this way, the highest conception of dedication means there is the accommodation of an infinitely numbered variety within it; and its sweetness will increase more and more.

So there are different instruments making different tunes from different strata of sound but they are all tuned to one. Plurality is connected to one centre and is giving some sweet, soothing feeling of sentiment. Similarly we can see that the earth and all the planets are each moving in their individual ways but they are connected to another force. The moon is moving around the earth, and there are so many planets moving in relation to other planets which in turn are moving in their own way, but all are moving around the sun. Variety meets unity in different planes of movement. That is harmony. This applies everywhere, including the plane of colour and the plane of sound.

Many branches meet together in the trunk of a tree; the trunk harmonizes the many leaves.

Disciple: In the Absolute sense does discord bring harmony?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: In the highest Absolute there is room to accommodate everything, otherwise it cannot be Absolute. If we consider something to be absolute but can still find something to be outside of that, then it cannot be Absolute. The Absolute accommodates everything. In Him the enemy is not an enemy! The Centre is everywhere, there is no circumference. In that plane only God can be traced everywhere and He cannot be our enemy.

Centenary Year

Chapter Forteen

Harmony— Beauty's Necessity

From "*Absolute Harmony*" transcribed and published by
Prabhu Madhura Kṛṣṇa as an illustrated limited edition (Australia 1991)

The theistic school says, "*Absolute* means Absolute Good. It is not zero, rather everything is fully represented there. The whole is so great that it can accommodate all." But Śaṅkarācāryya sacrificed plurality and accepted only oneness, saying, "Enemies and friends all become nothing. They become jumbled together." Such a thing is possible only in the zero-conception. But Chaitanya Mahāprabhu explained, "What Śaṅkarācāryya gave is not proper acceptance of the revealed truth, but both variety *and* oneness must be recognized."

In the *Upaniṣads* it is said, "There is no variegatedness." And Śaṅkarācāryya says, "There is no plurality but only oneness: *Brahman*." But Mahāprabhu says, "No! Variety also exists, otherwise there would be no necessity of saying anything whatsoever, as all would unanimously agree. Rather, there is One who is the Master and all else are subordinate; and they are active in a system—the controlled and the controller." He explained, "If you say that variety does not exist then what is the necessity of so much discussion? To whom have you come to preach? And if there is no variety then what is the necessity of preaching to those who are already one with you? Illusion also has its existence otherwise why have you come to try to remove illusion? If *māyā*—misunderstanding and misconception—does not exist then why are you preaching?"

It is a reality that there is always the possibility of misconception. Therefore there is always the necessity of a Guru to teach the truth.

There is not only the Absolute conception but also the relative, provincial conception, and they both co-exist. This is called *cid-vilāsa*: it is not the negation of a particular thing, but the adjustment of everything with the Whole, the Absolute, the Centre. Variety and oneness both exist simultaneously and this is called *acintya bhedābheda-tattva*, and this is the all-accommodating conclusion of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Still Śāṅkarācāryya accepts only one part; his conception is limited and not all-accommodating.

The only origin of fear is lack of harmony. Fear is born through disappointment resulting from lack of harmony. If that does not exist then there is no place for fear.

'Undesirability' is represented in Sanskrit as 'apprehension' or 'fear' and is regarded as something secondary to the Absolute. But how does it reach, and become transformed into, perfection? If we can introduce many interests into one common interest then there is harmony—no fear—and all is perfect.

At present we are suffering from the mania of separate interest. Only because we have deviated from our common Master, our common Guardian, we have come to suffer the disease of apprehension. If one Master is common to all, then no apprehension can arise. We will feel true unity amongst ourselves. If we fall on the ground, with the help of that same ground we can again stand.

So, forgetfulness of our Guardian is the cause of the all-disastrous situations in which we find ourselves. The only way to get out of that disaster is to be reinstated in the idea of common guardianship, and that is to be effected by the true *sādhus* who have not deviated from God consciousness. With their help we have to appeal to the all-controlling agency. Then we can again be reinstated in that echelon where we have our Master under whose holy feet we are to take shelter. If we can accept this, harmony will again be installed in our lives. So we are always to be conscious of our Guardian, the highest harmonizer—and that is true God consciousness.

Kṛṣṇa's two mothers, Yaśodā and Devakī, do not have an open relationship with each other. Kṛṣṇa's foster mother, Yaśodā, is always

afraid that Devakī and her husband, Vasudeva, may come to claim Kṛṣṇa as their child. How can it be that this happens? Similarly the members of Rādhārāṇī's camp consider Chandrāvalī's camp to be an anti-party to the main group of servitors. But the indirect section is always a necessary part of the Lord's Pastimes. Chandrāvalī has more intellect, whereas Rādhārāṇī has more sentiment. Similarly in all *rasas* (devotional mellows) there is harmony and also discord. Some opposition enhances the play of dedication.

In *sakhya-rasa* (the mood of serving the Lord as a friend) when Kṛṣṇa began to play with His friends, the cowherd boys, there were two parties: one side with Kṛṣṇa and the other with His brother, Balarāma. The cowherd boys were divided into two sections to represent opposite sides, and then they began to playfully fight. The punishment for whichever party would be defeated was that each was to carry a boy from the winning party on their shoulders. In this way a service-punishment was given.

Balarāma is very strong while on the opposing party Śrīdāmā is also very strong. In fact Śrīdāmā came into Kṛṣṇa's party because Kṛṣṇa is not as strong as Balarāma. In this way their playing began. When the two parties fought, Balarāma generally wouldn't accept that He was defeated, rather His nature was that He would become enraged.

Sometimes a demon would enter one of the parties by taking the form of a cowherd boy. In this manner Pralambāsura and Vyomāsura mixed with the play of the cowherd boys seeking an opportunity to take a boy on their shoulders and abduct him. One day Pralambāsura carried Balarāma into the depths of the jungle. But when Balarāma came to understand that He was being carried by a demon impostor He struck him with a great blow to the head. In this way the higher conception of truth runs in order to not only remove all difficulties—personified as demons—but to positively fill up the whole heart with sweet nectar. And the sweetest nectar is personified in Kṛṣṇa.

On another occasion Kṛṣṇa was considering the case of another miscreant, Śiśupāla, and how he could be removed. For this purpose He convened a meeting between Himself, Balarāma, and Uddhava, but Balarāma opposed everything Kṛṣṇa said. Whenever Kṛṣṇa wanted a

policy to be adopted, Balarāma would object, "What is this policy? Just leave it to Me, I shall kill him outright! What need is there of all these politics?—I don't understand." All the while Uddhava, who by nature is not partial to violence, tried to pacify Balarāma. The example of enhancement of the beauty of the Lord's Pastimes by discord and opposition is represented very cleverly in this story, in an ornamental way.

Muṣaladhara, a name of Balarāma meaning 'the wielder of the club-like weapon,' gives us a hint that He doesn't delight in the finer mental level of intellect and politics. He likes to solve everything with the strike of His club. So in Balarāma we find less intelligence, but stronger force. Still the greatest, most subtle opposing forces can only be harmonized by Kṛṣṇa. 'Harmony' means to control opposite forces.

Lord Rāmachandra expressed, "There is no greater friend than a brother to be found anywhere," while His own brother, Lakṣmaṇa, instead stressed the opposite angle of vision: "The brother is the worst type of enemy because when he emerges from the mother's womb the elder brother can no longer suck her breast. Indeed the elder brother is not only deprived of his mother's milk but he is also dispossessed of his mother's lap, as the new brother captures that also." So opposite conceptions have to be accommodated.

Disciple: We are all trying to be devotees but sometimes we see that there is some differentiation made between the Western and Indian devotees.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: You have so many differences such as your hair, eyes, etc.!

Disciple: These are material differences.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: But these are all drawn from the spiritual, they cannot demand any originality of their own.

There are so many things to be understood. Even it is found that in the presence of Kṛṣṇa at Puṣkaratīrtha the whole of the Yadu dynasties including such a host of great personalities were annihilated before His very eyes. But these dynasties fought in order to reveal the deeper

realities of the plane of the soul. Whatever He wills is truth proper. Can you understand this? Kṛṣṇa was a sightseer!—He simply watched. How can you adjust to that? Can you understand that fighting is life?

All the Pāṇḍavas including Arjjuna were submissive to King Yudhiṣṭhira, but still they sometimes revolted against him.

Peace such as in the deep slumber of *Brahma-nirvāṇa* is wanting in vitality; it is not true lasting peace. And the Absolute Truth is not impersonal but a Person.

Disciple: My desire is to see Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's unity, to see full harmony.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Harmony presupposes independent thinking, but in consonance with the common plane.

When a mother cooks food, one child may say, "This is bitter," another may say, "This is salty" and another, "This is sour." So where there are many varieties there must be the question of life. Variety shows that life is present. In diversity there is polarity within unity, otherwise simply "unity" means jumbling everything together—a dead unity.

Viṣṇu does not represent just one feature but He represents infinite features which accommodate infinite possibilities. Kṛṣṇa is *akhila rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ* (the emporium of all nectarean *rasas*). Different groups of His servitors have so many diverse elements. Even Rādhārāṇī and Chandrāvalī compete with each other. They each head separate camps which fight in competition to satisfy Him. We have to understand how all this is possible. Mildly, with humility, we have to try to follow.

In the parliament there is an opposition party, but it is there to enhance the work of the main party. In this way the direct and the indirect combine in order to make the government complete, and if that principle is applied everywhere, it is not difficult to understand the nature of difference. We are not to try to create another world, but we are to understand what already exists. Why is it so? What is the underlying meaning behind it? What are the differences between Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma? Balarāma sometimes sides with Duryyodhana and

Kṛṣṇa sides with the Pāṇḍavas, yet Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are almost one and the same. So how are we to understand that? What is your answer? Do you think it is all bogus?!

Disciple: I can simply say I came to the Gauḍīya Maṭh for Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's gift of Love.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes, this is true. And love means that there is classification amongst brothers. Rūpa Goswāmī gave the explanation

aher iva gatiḥ premṇaḥ svabhāva-kuṭilā bhavet

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Madhya 8.110)

Just as a serpent moves in a crooked way, similarly is the nature of Love's progress. The nature of affection is not straightforward because it has to accommodate everything in it. Everything possible in existence is accommodated in love. Love means sacrifice to such a high degree that it can embrace everything. The movement of love is generally crooked and, for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, it has been designed in this way by the Lord's Divine Power, Yogamāyā, in order to prevent any staleness or sterility from entering the Pastimes. So try to adjust to this. Don't be eager to create another world.

To do away with opposition, greater harmony is necessary. And in the higher type of harmony, opposition even enhances the beauty of that harmony and helps it. When harmony is successful then it is found to be the necessity of beauty. Kṛṣṇa represents beauty, and His harmonizing capacity supersedes everything. There is nothing He cannot harmonize, and all enemies become friends in that harmony. In so many ways this is to be accommodated. The Lord is the centre of highest harmony, He is sweetness, He is our Master, and He is the Divine Love of us all.

Chandrāvalī is in opposition to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī yet by Yogamāyā their competition produces more satisfaction for Kṛṣṇa. Everything is for Him. Through *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* all possible types of ecstasy are harmonized, nothing is neglected. Justification of all existence is found there. That diversity and unity is all to satisfy His purpose. Rādhārāṇī Herself said, "The other *Gopīs* do not know it, but I have no objection if they come forward, for My only concern is for Kṛṣṇa's

satisfaction. My concentration is always there, but the standard of their service isn't so exclusive as to give full satisfaction to Him properly. That is my objection. They rush forward to serve Kṛṣṇa but they do not know how to fully satisfy Him, otherwise I would allow them to." In this way Rādhārāṇī's statement justified Her feeling. This statement of Rādhārāṇī, where She does not consider Her devotion to be commonplace in the company of those exclusive servitors competing for Kṛṣṇa's affection—that is Her special beauty.

Her degree and intensity of endeavour to satisfy Kṛṣṇa is above all others. Kṛṣṇa represents the whole play, He is the Centre and the source of everyone's love. But certain servitors like Lalitā and Viśākhā are directly serving Rādhārāṇī; while there are also those in Chandrāvalī's camp who are serving her in opposition to Rādhārāṇī. That anti-party group is essential, just as the opposition party is necessary in a democratic parliament.

What is the purpose of this world? That is known only to Him. The first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that He alone is fully aware of the purpose of His activity. He is the Absolute Autocrat, He doesn't have to explain Himself to anyone. Everything is for Him. Also, in some way He is for us.

**aham bhakta-parādhīno, hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo, bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ**
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.63)

"I do not know anyone but My devotees. All the saints are my sweethearts, and I am also their sweetheart. They do not know anyone but Me and I also do not care to know anyone but them."

He is for the devotees and the devotees are for Him. That is the Substance and the potency, the Enjoyer and the enjoyed, the Positive and the negative, the Served and the servitor—both combine to make the Whole: the Subject and the object.

No subject can exist without an object. Subject means the thinking thinker; and there must be something to be thought otherwise the subject cannot exist. There must be some thinker and then recognition of a particular thing.

Disciple: Rādhārāṇī sends Her different associates to canvas on Her behalf. Does Chandrāvalī also have her associates canvassing for her?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes, there is a clash between Rādhārāṇī's followers like Lalitā and Viśākhā and the followers of Chandrāvalī such as Saibya and Padmā. Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura has written, "As the attendant of Rādhārāṇī's camp, I do not like to see that area in Vṛndāvan where the camp of Chandrāvalī is, because Padmā's interest is always to take Kṛṣṇa from Rādhārāṇī's special place to Chandrāvalī's camp and if Kṛṣṇa goes there then our place will become dark." But still opposition is necessary in the development of different levels of service just as hunger or fasting is necessary for relishing food. It is all designed only to intensify the standard of service.

And what degree of attraction and service to Rādhārāṇī do we find in Lalitādevī? If a drop of perspiration is found on the feet of Rādhā or Govinda she prays for one hundred thousand bodies to busily remove that perspiration. This sort of intense devotion is the unit of measurement to gauge love for one's beloved. This is the inner feeling. Waves of such nature come from within one who comes in connection with that Vṛndāvan proper.

In Goloka Vṛndāvan, the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, there are so many parties. There the Pastimes appear to be similar to the competition that goes on here in this world, but the difference is all in the degree of sacrifice the devotee has for their Lord. The life of a devotee is a life of endless sacrifice.

The *Gopīs* of Vṛndāvan are perfectly self-forgetful of their own interest and well-being; they are cent-percent devoted not only in the present but also in the eternal future. There they live in the land of mercy, beauty, charm and affection; the plane of Absolute surrender. And that is the highest plane of our life. Nothing less than wholesale surrender is required there. As Kṛṣṇa states, "If you give yourself wholesale to Me then I will give Myself wholesale to you."

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has given us an example of the gradation of service: When Kṛṣṇa is at the summit of Govarddhan Hill and He sees Balarām and His *sakhya* friends playing in the pasturing ground below, He also sees Yaśodā with all her helpers busily preparing His

meal. All the *dāśya* servitors are seen to be engaged in some arrangement under the direction of Yaśodā. Chandrāvalī, with her group, is approaching a particular meeting place; while His beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is coming with Her friends to an appointed place to be united with Kṛṣṇa. All the different groups represented together around Govarddhan are assembling there—*śānta*, *dāśya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhura*—all are in His sight. He is overseeing everything. So very many affectionate servitors are all vying for His attention but His eyes are always drawn to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her group.

Even Lakṣmīdevī—the Goddess of Fortune and wife of Lord Viṣṇu—wanted to participate in the *Rāsa-līlā* of those simple cowherd girls of Vṛndāvan, the *Gopīs*, but She could not enter, for that market—that place of the *Rāsa-līlā* Pastime—is so very exclusive. Although she has all the wealth and grandeur of Lord Śrī Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha, still, unsatisfied, She is running to join in that great dance in which Kṛṣṇa is at the centre.

No capitalist can enter that market and open a shop there for He has the full monopoly. There is only one commodity in the market and that commodity is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The earth itself feels the charming union with Kṛṣṇa by the divine touch of His Feet. The birds, insects, His friends—everything in the environment—sing in His sweet play. Only unconditional exclusive Divine Love can enter there. So much so, the attraction of Kṛṣṇa has captured the hearts of everyone there wholesale. God's grace is of such charming, intense nature that there is no way out but to serve the sweetness—not by fear, nor by hope, nor by the sense of duty, but all are helplessly attracted to sweet Kṛṣṇa. Living harmony reigns there in its most natural and intense form. The servants of that quarter feel they cannot live without that service. That is their food.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī prays, “You have captured My heart fully. Every atom of My body wants only You, but the circumstances are so cruel that we are parted. So I will jump into that deep well, taking My life. I pray You will come and take My position and I will take Yours, Oh Kṛṣṇa, Oh Śrī Nandanandan. Then You will realise what hopelessness I am going through and will understand My trouble.”

In that self-same mood Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, "My friends save Me by showing Me Kṛṣṇa, otherwise I can not maintain My existence! What I once saw, touching My heart like lightning then withdrawing, show Me once again for I cannot tolerate the separation. How many times can one die in a second to earn that fortune, to get a moment's perception of Kṛṣṇa? I am ready to die millions of times. My heart bursts without having a second view of that wonderful thing! I had a little experience previously, but beauty and sweetness can be so cruel! If I do not get that vision I shall die."

Centenary Jai

Chapter Fifteen

Ambition of Life

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

We don't like to live in this material world that is so nasty. We are trying to realise how to live in the land of the soul. We are soul and we should live there.

yad gatvā na nivartante , tad dhāma paramam mama

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 15.6)

(Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna: "That is My all-illuminating holy abode from which the surrendered souls never return once having reached there.")

and:

ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ, punar āvartino 'rjuna

mām upetya tu kaunteya, punar janma na vidyate

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 8.16)

("O Arjuna, beginning from Brahmāloka, the highest planet in the universe, downwards, certainly the residents of all planets are naturally subjected to repeated birth and death. But, O Kaunteya, upon reaching Me, there is no rebirth.")

It is coming into being, then again vanishing. It is being created, then destroyed. Creation and destruction is the nature of this plane of life, and we must leave this dress and find our 'soul' person and live in the plane of soul beyond the jurisdiction of this world. This is achieved by the use of our intelligence and mainly by the causeless mercy of the Vaiṣṇava: *sukṛti*. *Sukṛti* when accumulated creates *śraddhā* for the unseen cause. What is seen becomes neglected, and appreciation grows for what is unseen. The unseen is more reliable. The 'unseen' means that which is not under material experience, but it is more reliable than this place of 'concrete' life which is sure to go—

and not only mine, but everyone's. So this bogus plane should not be trusted any longer. We must seek somewhere else. If we enter within our heart we shall find that, yes, there is mind, there is intelligence, there is soul, Super Soul and so on in the subtle world. Whereas this seen world is proven to be of change and destruction.

Our ambition of life is the higher plane of Kṛṣṇa. We want to live in a country where the general insult and disregard is absent.

We can live an honourable life there. Whereas this plane is sure to go, and we see it every day and at every moment. Yūdhiṣṭhir Mahārāj said, "What is more wonderful than this? Every day we see everything going to the jaws of death, but we are not preparing ourselves for that. Instead our tendency is that as much time as possible we shall stay here."

The whole of our energy we are using almost for nothing. We are using our energy for impossibility. I shall have to leave, and *all* of us we shall have to leave this place, still we want to give so much attention to building houses and this and that.

For this reason we are making Temples, etc., so that in this way so many persons' energy will be used for the purpose of the Lord and they will be saved. Energy should be used for Him, and that is the way in which we can go to His land. All aspects of our life should be utilised for His service and that is the royal road to go swiftly to His domain. The whole energy should be used for His purpose.

Everything is for Him. We must realise this truth. Nothing is for us, and I am also for Him. The Infinite, the Absolute is such in His nature and His very existence, that everything is for Him. At present we are separatists thinking, "This is mine, I may be monarch of all I survey" But this is the anti-current that has taken us far away from Him, thus causing us to become prey to death and disease.

Chapter Sixteen

Place of Solution

Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Nabadwīp is considered by the high order devotees to be the highest place of theism of Absolute Love. Śrī Rādhikā and Govinda combined Themselves together, and they are avowed to give their dearest thing to the public. As Sri Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu They came here with this idea.

Both parties have the best wealth, and They have come to distribute that for the benefit of the public: "Come this way, you will get the highest thing that we taste ourselves. The same dish you can have. O people, you can have a taste of the same dish as we relish. It is the play of the highest order. *Prem. Love.*"

Raso vai saḥ: the *Upaniṣads* say that sweetness—*rasa*, *ānandam*, *sundaram*—is really controlling the whole creation. Everyone wants *rasa*, none can say otherwise. From the atheists to the highest order of theist, everyone wants *rasa*.

If we can develop the eye to see, then every atom of Gaura-Dhām will charm us to the utmost. Only the eye is necessary. By charm every atom is sufficient to engage us fully and accommodate us whole-sale. One particle of dust can give us fullest engagement because all is infinite and of the most generous type here. All the dust is of the most generous type and promising for Kṛṣṇa.

Every particle of dust promises to give us Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, so what more do we need? They all promise, and this is the outcome of Gaura-Dhām. No other nature can be traced in them. They are all helping to take us to our highest attainment. Really seeing, it is their nature.

Externally according to our *anartha* it may produce so many tests and examinations, but with the least test and least trouble, they are ready to give our highest goal: the connection of Mahāprabhu, and the eye to see who Mahāprabhu is. The angle of vision is the most important thing, the angle of vision to look upon the environment.

In Vṛndāvan there are apparently so many demons such as Aghāsura, Bakāsura, Dhenuka, Vyoma, Ariṣṭa, Keśī and Karṇsa, but they are on the surface, whereas Kṛṣṇa is everywhere. There is the superficial vision and the real vision. Similarly there is the internal self, and the necessity of that internal self—soul's necessity—avoiding the superfluous, the surface.

The surface is for our physical senses, and for the mind there is also a mental layer of different types of religionists including so many other religions. But in the layer of soul, when we come to appreciate assistance from others, then we will come to appreciate how beautiful and how magnanimous is the connection of Gaurāṅga here in Nabadwīp. How it can enrich our soul! Our soul's necessity.

Centenary

All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Śrī Guru-Praśastiḥ In Glorification of Śrī Gurudev

by Om Viṣṇupād Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

śrī gauramaṇḍala-mājhe hāpāniyā grāma
yāhi avatīrṇa mora prabhu guṇa dhāma [1]

patita pāvanī gaṅgā tīra sannihita
'nyāyaratna-vidyāpīṭha' bhuvana-vidita [2]

tāhi vaise vipravara praśānta udāra
śrī upendra chandra 'vidyāratna' nāma yāra [3]

bhaṭṭāchāryya-kula-ravi parama vidvāna
nirantara sevā para lakṣmī-nārāyaṇa [4]

tāra patnī gaurī devī parama pāvanī
mahā sādhvī jaganmātā prabhura janani [5]

āṭhāraśa satera śake saurāśvina māsa
śanivāra, chhāvviśa divasa parakāśa [6]

budhāditya-jīva yoge tuṅga graha gaṇe
rāmachandra-rāśyāśraye vīrachandra-dine [7]

śubhāṅkarī puṣyā aṅke kārttikī navamī
dharaṇī haila dhanya prabhupada chumi [8]

uṭhila ānanda-rola āchāryya-bhavane
śaṅkha-ghaṇṭā jayadhvani deya nārīgaṇe [9]

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Centenary Year

Śrī Guru-Praśastiḥ In Glorification of Śrī Gurudev

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śaṅkha-ghaṇṭā jayadhvani deya nārīgaṇe [9]

ājānulamvita bhuja purāṭa sundara
devī anke śobhe divya jyoti manohara [10]

heriyā putrera rūpa mugdha pitāmātā
mugdha haila putra rūpe yata pati vratā [11]

rāmachandra-janma kṣaṇa śmari vipravara
rākhilā putrera nāma rāmendra-sundara [12]

apūrvva vālaka-śobhā vyāpila bhuvane
anindya rāmendra chandra bāre dine dine [13]

dekhite dekhite prabhu labhilā yauvana
parama samṛddha kari vidyā upārjjana [14]

divya suvimala tanu mahājyotirmaya
nirakhi sakala loka sādharma mānaya [15]

vairāgya bhāvita bhakti-pūrṇa kalevara
śaivāla-pihita yena mahā-sarovara [16]

mahājñānī śuka prāya virakta pradhāna
heri mātā pitā mane chinte anukṣaṇa [17]

sannyāsī haive putra nā rahibe ghare
mahā-yogī mahā-tyāgī lakṣaṇa śarīre [18]

antare ānanda, vāhye duḥkha parakāśa
katodine kailā vipra śrī vaikuṇṭha vāsa [19]

krame krame prabhu mora āpanā prakāśi
svechchhāya vandhana khaṇḍi hailā sannyāsī [20]

gṛha tyāgi māyāpura karilā vijaya
gaurāṅga-janma bhumi chidānanda maya [21]

śrī bhaktisiddhānta saraswatī prabhu-sthāne
lailā sannyāsa dīna uddhāra kārṇa [22]

śrī bhakti rakṣaka saṅkīrtana-mūrtti dhara
sei hetu guru nāma rākhilā śrīdhara [23]

patita pāvana rūpe tridaṇḍira veśe
nāma-prema vitariyā bule deśe deśe [24]

dīna-hīna pāpītāpī savāre uddhāri
amṛta siñchilā viśve yena gaurahari [25]

jaya jaya patita-pāvana prabhuvara
nyāsi-chūrāmaṇi bhakti rakṣaka śrīdhara [26]

asamkhyā praṇati tava pādapadme mora
kṛpāya karaha nāśa karma vandha ghora [27]

bhavārṇave pare śudhu hāburuvu khāi
e adhame uddhāriyā deha pade thāi [28]

vandi āvirbhāva-tithi śrī kṛṣṇā-navamī
yēha dhanya haila prabhupāda padma chumi [29]

vandi hāpāniyā grāma mahā tīrtha maya,
vandi prabhu śrī upendra chandrera ālaya [30]

vandi nitya bhāṭṭāchāryya-kulābja-bhāskara
vandi vidyā ratna putra rāmendrasundara [31]

sāvadhāne vandi mui gaurī devī mātā
yāra aṅka ālokari prabhu prakāśitā [32]

prabhura sambandha dhārī yateka sujana
sānande vandanā kari savāra charaṇa [33]

sabe kṛpā kari more kara āśīrvvāda
nirvvighne hauka lābha prabhura prasāda [34]

All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Śrī Guru-Praśastiḥ In Glorification of Śrī Gurudev

by Om Viṣṇupād Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

My Divine Lord and Master, the Abode of all Transcendental Qualities, came down into this world at Village Hāpāniyā in the Holy Land of Śrī Gaura-Maṇḍal. [1]

‘Nyāyaratna-Vidyāpīṭh’ was a famous place of learning, situated near the banks of the Holy River Ganges that purifies the universe. [2]

There lived the jewel of Brāhmaṇas, Śrī Upendra Chandra ‘Vidyāratna’, peaceful and magnanimous. [3]

Like the radiant sun of the Bhaṭṭachāryya family line, he was superbly learned; he was ever absorbed in the Divine Service of the Supreme Lord and His Consort, Śrī Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. [4]

His devoted wife was the gracious Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī—the great saintly lady, the mother of the universe. And she was the mother of my Lord. [5]

1817 Śaka era, month of Āśvin by the sun, on Saturday the 26th, was his Holy Day of Advent. [6]

At the conjunction of the Sun and Mercury, and the Moon and Jupiter, with many stars in their highest position, my Lord chose the day of Śrī Virachandra Prabhu in the shelter of the same sign of the zodiac that the Supreme Lord Śrī Rāmchandra appeared in. [7]

At the auspicious moment of the eighth star Pūṣyā on the ninth day of the month Kārttik, mother Earth was blessed as she kissed the lotus feet of my Lord. [8]

A great joyous vibration filled the house of Āchāryya Vidyāratna as the pious ladies triumphantly blew the conch-shell and rang the bell. [9]

His Form was beautiful radiant golden. His long arms reached to his knees, the symptom of the great soul. As he curled up in the lap of his gracious mother, a charming Divine Radiance came forth. [10]

Seeing their son's beauty, mother and father, and all the chaste wives present were entranced. [11]

That best of Brāhmaṇas remembered the auspicious moment of the Appearance of Lord Rāmchandra, and so it was that he named his beloved, beautiful son Śrī Rāmendra. [12]

The marvellous beauty of the child pervaded the universe. And it was day by day that the spotless moon Śrī Rāmendra grew and grew. [13]

All could see as he gracefully bloomed in youth, the supreme treasure of wisdom was his natural acquisition. [14]

Seeing his greatly effulgent Divine Perfect Form, all were moved to offer him all respects with reverence. [15]

His body, like a great lake covered by moss, was filled with Devotion and absorbed in indifference for the world. [16]

Seeing the extreme detachment in his nature just like the great savant Śukadev, his mother and father began to feel a constant anxiety. [17]

"Our son will be a sannyāsī, he won't stay at home. All the symptoms of a Paramhaṁsa completely indifferent to the world are present in his body." [18]

Feeling ecstasy within yet showing sorrow outwardly, the Brāhmaṇa Śrī Upendra Chandra left the world for the Holy Abode Vaikuṇṭha. [19]

Gradually, my Lord revealed himself to the world, and by his sweet will breaking all ties with the world, he became a Sannyāsī. [20]

Leaving home forever he made his auspicious arrival at Mâyāpur, the Divine Ecstatic Land of Śrī Gaurāṅga's Advent. [21]

Just for delivering the poor souls of this world, he accepted Sannyās from Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī. [22]

Because he is the Guardian of Devotion as the very embodiment of the world chanting of the Glories of the Supreme Lord, his Guru named him Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj, the Lord of the highest Wealth of the soul. [23]

As the saviour of the fallen, he took the mantle of the medicant holding the triple staff, tridaṇḍa, and wandering from place to place he distributed Divine Love for the Holy Name of the Lord. [24]

Delivering the sinners and suffering souls from the worst conditions of life, he showered nectar all over the universe just as did our Lord Śrī Gaurahari. [25]

All Glory, all Glory to the Great Benevolent Lord, the crown-jewel of Saṅnyāsins, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. [26]

My countless prostrate obeisances unto your holy lotus feet. Be gracious and break my terrible mundane bondage. [27]

I am drowning in this material ocean. Please rescue this fallen soul and grant him a place at your lotus feet. [28]

I sing the Glories of the day of your Advent, the ninth day of the dark moon, who was so blessed to kiss the lotus feet of Your Divine Grace. [29]

I sing the Glories of Hāpāniyā Village, the great place of pilgrimage, I sing the Glories of the home of Śrī Upendra Chandra Prabhu. [30]

I eternally sing the Glories of Śrī Upendra Chandra Vidyāratna's Divine son who is the merciful radiant sun, Śrī Rāmendra Sundar, who gave the connection of his Divine Ray to the lotus flower of the Bhaṭṭāchāryya heritage. [31]

Also, I very carefully sing the Glories of Mother Gaurī Devī, whose lap was effulgent with the merciful Advent of my Lord. [32]

With joy I sing the Glories of the feet of all the auspicious souls who had a relationship with my Lord. [33]

It is my prayer to you all, please be merciful and bless me that I may without obstacles attain the Loving Service of my Lord. [34]

Appendix

The following are the translations of the four seed verses—*catuḥ ślokī*—of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.33–36) as given by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj:

- 33) Brahmā, it is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead, and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.
- 34) O Brahmā, whatever appears to be of any value, if it is without relation to Me, has no reality. Know it as My illusory energy, that reflection which appears to be in darkness.
- 35) O Brahmā, please know that the universal elements enter into the cosmos and at the same time do not enter into the cosmos; similarly, I Myself also exist within everything created, and at the same time I am outside of everything.
- 36) A person who is searching after the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, must certainly search for it up to this, in all circumstances, in all space and time, and both directly and indirectly.

Centenary



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*Kanak, kāmīnī, and
pratiṣṭhā are the
three main disturbing
elements that
misguide us and
draw us from this side
to that.*

*But when we are free
from them,
the street we walk
shall be
broad and clear.*

—Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(*Kanak, kāmīnī, pratiṣṭhā:*
the desire for money, women and fame.)